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Preface

By: Laura L. Knoppers

In her introduction to this engaged and committed collection of essays, Laura Lunger Knoppers discusses recent developments in the way historians regard the English Revolution. She notes the displacement of “Marxist and Whiggish teleologies” by a “revisionist” challenge emphasizing consensus and short-term triggers of occasion and personality” (6). Knoppers skillfully positions this volume as a “post-revisionist” synthesis of these two approaches, and the essays collected here support this description. Although she cites Christopher Hill’s recognition that “there was a revolution in English literature” (7) as well as in other aspects of society, this book contains no Marxist or indeed Whiggish essays. Nor does it contain revisionist refutations of such teleologies. Rather, the book cleverly sidesteps recent controversies regarding the politics of the civil war by concentrating on the ways in which, as Knoppers puts it, “the idea of revolution has been recovered and redefined in cultural terms” (7). The guiding assumption is that politics operates in the realm of aesthetics and that the boundaries between such ostensibly separate fields of human endeavor ought to be regarded as porous. The revolutionary politics of mid-seventeenth-century England are clearly legible in its literature, whether or not the texts explicitly address political concerns.



Interdisciplinary approaches and reformulate understanding fannish reading

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Abstract

The texts using book history can reformulate our understanding of fannish reading, writing, and publication. This reading relies on acknowledging that we have accepted as cultural norm hierarchies of value between print and digital that emphasize traditional patriarchal and public practices of reading and writing over private coterie practices, ones that have their roots in the history of women's reading and writing. The transition from private circulation—much fan fiction is shared on platforms aimed at specific communities—to mass publication is less unusual than these examples would have us believe; indeed, it makes up the greater part of the history of women's writing in Milton Studies. However, fan fiction has yet to be accepted as part of that history, or indeed, of the history of publication in general. Nonetheless, I would like to argue that if we problematize how we consider the form and content of fan writing in both its creation and reception, we can read fan fiction as part of a continuum of historical publication practices.

Keywords: interdisciplinary studies, approaches, fannish readings.

I was once told that book history is not applicable to the study of fan fiction as, "by definition," such writing is not disseminated in book form—that is, as a printed codex. Though the contemporary

discipline of book history looks beyond this narrow definition to include multiple technologies of production and consumption, from scroll to e-book, this challenge to including the study of fan fiction in

book history ignores both the better part of fannish history and truly massive amounts of fannish production: library collections at the University of California, Riverside have fanzine holdings in the hundreds of thousands, while numerous other research institutions, such as the University of Iowa and Texas A&M University, hold thousands of issues as well. Fan fiction is also published online, whether in private and locked communities (such as some fan Web sites and closed groups on LiveJournal), on a semi-public platform such as Wattpad (which requires users to provide an e-mail address and register as members), or in completely open archives such as FanFiction.net and the Archive of Our Own. Together, these sites provide texts in the millions. Too little fan studies scholarship notes that there is a linear progression in connections between and access to fan works in the transition from print to digital publication and circulation; for example, both Camille Bacon-Smith's *Enterprising Women* (1992) and Henry Jenkins's *Textual Poachers* (1992), seminal works in the field, focused on media studies rather than on literary study, and attempted to normalize perceptions of fans and fannish behaviors. While they both referenced print fanzines, they emphasized the *why* of their creation, rather than the *how* of their production and consumption. And they examined individual texts and authors as singular or exemplary case studies, not seeing

them as connected to a significant body of work with its own history. Later studies, such as Rhiannon Bury's *Cyberspaces of Their Own: Female Fandoms Online* (2005) and Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse's edited collection *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet* (2006), similarly looked at specific fandoms and topics, including literary critique, but likewise considered only contemporary fan works rather than fandom's print-based roots. As a methodology, book history can usefully reframe and recontextualize studies of fannish production, dissemination, and consumption, enabling us to expand our considerations of such texts, rather than isolating them as unique case studies.

The first American and British fanzines appeared in the early 1930s, concurrent with new technologies of what we now call desktop publishing; using stencils and gelatin, fan writers could quickly and cheaply copy volumes of commentary on fans and fandom, plus, of course, the earliest fan fiction. The term "fan fiction" itself was also coined in the 1930s, signifying amateur writing by self-identified fans rather than the transformative works derived from media and literary fandoms that we know today. This linguistic and intellectual shift needs to be queried further (note 1), but from the 1930s through the 1990s, bound and printed fan fiction was circulated, read, and discussed by numerous social communities in science fiction (and fantasy)

fandom. In her book *The Battle of the Sexes in Science Fiction* (2002), Justine Larbalestier describes publisher Hugo Gernsback, best known as the founder of *Amazing Stories* in 1926 and later memorialized through SFF fandom's annual Hugo Award, using the word "fan" to describe "the passionate readers" of his magazine—and, "strange to say," many of them were women—but Larbalestier's focus is on fans as readers and writers of genre rather than as transformative readers and writers (2002, 23). Helen Merrick's *The Secret Feminist Cabal* (2009) covers similar ground and introduces a number of women fans as readers and writers in the 1930s and later on, but she too avoids discussion of fans as readers and writers of transformative texts, and focuses on only a small number of specific fanzine titles as case studies rather than examining the medium more broadly. Further, both of these works are classified and presented as volumes of science fiction studies rather than of fan studies or literary history, though functionally they can be read as examples of both, since both examine literary production and consumption. This lack of attention is due to the low cultural value put on fan writing.

While the history of fan writing is convoluted at best, its bibliography is neglected altogether. Very few bibliographies of fan writing exist, and almost all of them are created by and for fans themselves. This is largely because of changing

practices of authorship in fandom; early works were often written under fans' real names, and so what bibliographies there are run the risk of "outing" them (note 2). They are also often out of print and hard to find. One example is the *Trexindex*, a three-issue fanzine with seven supplements issued between 1977 and 1993. Subtitled *The Complete Encyclopedia of Star Trek Fan Magazines*, it aimed to index all fan stories and fan authors writing during that period. (There are also bibliographic lists created as finding aids for fanzines in library holdings, and while these are public, they are limited in scope and context.)

Bibliography itself, loosely defined, is the study and analysis of texts, their production, and their transmission. As a discipline, it is much more than the dry lists of books and technical data found in library catalogues that describe material objects; rather, to quote D. F. McKenzie, one of its most important champions, it reveals the history of texts in society itself, investigating "what their production, dissemination, and reception reveal about past human life and thought" (1992, 298). While fan studies shares similar concerns in uncovering and analyzing fannish regard for the creation and use of fan texts, the field has not made use of book history's methodology to do so. I would consider this an argument in favor of examining the methodology, and the material, more closely rather than disregarding them altogether, as I was urged to. To quote Leslie Howsam: "Like social class

(in E. P. Thompson's famous formulation), the book is not so much a category as a process: books happen; they happen to people who read, reproduce, disseminate, and compose them; and they happen to be significant. The book can be a force for change and the history of the book documents that change" (2006, 5).

At the same time, the field of book history is heavily invested in maintaining and reinforcing the traditional status of print culture, and especially of Western, Anglo-European printed discourse, and this investment has its drawbacks too. Indeed, studies of the book in Eastern and various indigenous cultures are only a few decades old; Henry Jenkins's *Textual Poachers* (1992) predates studies of the book in the pre-Columbian Americas and a great deal of work on the book in Eastern and Islamic cultures, among others (Mignolo 1995; Suarez and Woudhuysen 2013). This very narrow discourse is currently expanding, but it nonetheless remains invested in microdefinitions of—and so, I would argue, microaggressions to—nonmale and nonwhite writing, reading, and textual circulation. And so, the "objective" (I use this word with awareness of all its connotations) form of the "book" is a printed codex created by and for a Western, patriarchal culture that emphasizes the public masculine voice and pointedly minimizes all others.

How then can we define a "book," when we have already acknowledged its wide range of meanings? The production

of the printed codex, at least, has been best defined and revealed through Robert Darnton's famous communications circuit, a theoretical model created in 1982 that centers the book as object in a schema that runs from the author to the publisher (if the bookseller does not assume that role), the printer, the shipper, the bookseller, and the reader. The reader completes the circuit because he influences the author both before and after the act of composition. Authors are readers themselves...So the circuit runs full circle. It transmits messages, transforming them en route, as they pass from thought to writing to printed characters and back to thought again. (Darnton [1982] 2005, 11)

Various interventions in this model have been formulated over the years (Adams and Barker 2006; Phelps 1996; McDonald 1997; Secord 2000; Bachleitner 2009; Weel 2015), but none of them query this basic context of masculine production or public consumption, nor how it functionally removes women both as writers and as tradeswomen. Moreover, this model is increasingly recognized as a picture of production during a very specific time period. In her 2014 essay "Do Women Have a Book History?" Michelle Levy points out these shortcomings, noting,

Rethinking [Darnton's] communication circuit in terms of gender compels us to confront the gender asymmetry that existed within commercial publishing...Gender complicates some of the fundamental assumptions embedded in

the communication circuit, which, by assigning discrete roles to various groups, obscures the overlapping roles that many individuals, and it seems, many women, played within the print marketplace. (312)

However, by focusing explicitly on commercial publishing, Levy too bypasses manuscript culture. There are currently no models of the book that consider manuscript publication—the form in which most women's writing was disseminated and read for some 300 years. Nor have there been any expansive studies of private press or zine production, through which both SF fandom at large and women in particular disseminated texts through the second half of the twentieth century; nor of digital publication and print-on-demand, forms that are indisputably characteristic of contemporary fannish publishing and reading.

Indeed, the patriarchal print model is only just starting to be disrupted. Margaret Ezell, in her 1999 volume *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print*, goes into more detail on the actual materiality of women's writing and publishing, particularly in the 16th through 18th centuries. She points out that women's writing and its circulation in manuscript form, as forms of social authorship and interaction, are critical not only to literary context but also to its reception by contemporary scholars, noting that

having a "voice" is equated with being in print, with the obvious implication that "work" is equated with print texts and

anything else, manuscript copy in particular, is only "silence." The sole criterion of the success of these generations of women writers is the amount they *published*, with no mention of the amount they actually *wrote*. Intentionally or not, we thus train our students to classify literary activity with print as the superior mode and to employ false gender dichotomies when interpreting early modern texts. (43–44, italics original)

The insight that Ezell applies to early modern texts I apply to contemporary ones: by minimizing or ignoring digital production in favor of print, we erase significant patterns of production and consumption and deny the true impact of readers and writers on the intellectual, social, and economic fields of textual markets. Further, by erasing the larger history of fan texts aside from or prior to media fandom, we create an ahistorical narrative in which contemporary communities and texts are intellectually disconnected from previous ones, and thus minimized and decontextualized. In doing so we perpetuate and reinforce textual hierarchies in which print is valorized at the expense of the manuscript and the digital, masculine production at the expense of the feminine. We endorse intellectual values that privilege a specific image of the canon in our classrooms and culture. Unpacking these paradigms reveals a great deal about how the discourse of fandom is shaped by the discourse of the printed book.

Locating the space and materials of fannish publishing

When literary historians consider the history of women's writing, they typically look at how women operated in the public, "male" space of print publication as compared to the private, "feminine" space of manuscript publication. In the 16th and 17th centuries women writers built communities to share writing that they could disseminate in manuscript, or handwritten form: private, gendered literary production for a specific audience of cultural "insiders" (often known as "one's friends"). We should consider how women fans' zine and Web publishing can function as an analog to historical manuscript circulation, especially since such fans are preoccupied with controlling access to their literary endeavors, how texts reflect small communities with specific personal ties, and how their writings often were and are denigrated by predominantly male publishers and scholars. In short, we should think how we might locate women's fan writing as part of the greater history of women's literary writing and production. By revising contemporary narratives of both book history and fan history, we can reread women's work in the literary and book trades from the 17th and the 21st centuries as a function of operating with and subverting patriarchal norms of literary production. In other words, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Problematizing the space of production is a key point of entry into considering how we value the public, commercial space versus the private space of affective labor, especially given that one of the major fannish mores is to never profit materially from one's writing. (Indeed, some of the greatest objections I have seen to the popularity of *Fifty Shades of Gray* and similar novels is their authors' betrayal of the fannish community by republishing their work for money!) A passage in Margot Adler's *Drawing Down the Moon*, an ethnographic study of contemporary neopaganism first published in 1979 and revised in 1986, sets a scene that would have been very familiar—except for the nudity—to fans in previous generations:

Eight or nine people sat around a long low table that was covered with stacks of freshly-printed pages...The sound of friendly chatter mingled with the rustling of pages, the steady firing of a stapling machine, and the occasional crunching of popcorn, which was being passed around in a large bowl...Only one person in the room was wearing any clothes, a fact that didn't seem noticeable after a few minutes...Everyone—dressed or undressed—was engaged in the business of the day, which was sorting, collating, and stapling, and mailing the 74th issue of *The Green Egg*. (265–66)

Collating parties were a staple, as it were, of zine publishing. Zines proliferated widely in the late 1970s, moving beyond their roots in science fiction fan

communities and into the punk, feminist, and New Age movements. Zines took multiple forms, from letterzines (typed copies of correspondence that were then disseminated to all members of a textual conversation) to bound volumes. Sometimes they imitated traditional newspapers or magazines in their format, typefaces, and paper; at other times they appeared as codices, with colophons and illustrated soft or hard covers. They would usually be distributed by subscription, with a set number of copies produced for a set number of subscribers, occasionally with a handful of extras that could be sold or given to others outside the group. Zines were usually made in someone's home (a private, domestic space), but they would often have significant public, and so "published," lives. Print runs could number anywhere between ten and several hundred, depending on the number of subscribers and the size of the potential nonsubscriber audience. Popular issues of zines could have multiple editions; colophons for certain *Star Trek* zines supply information such as "fifth edition, three hundred and fifty copies." Some of the most popular titles ultimately had two or even three thousand copies made and sold. Zines were thus not always small or inexpensive productions; they required a number of people to provide content, labor, and materials.

We might then see contemporary fannish desktop and Web publishing as

an inversion of historical printing practices. The very nomenclature of English and colonial American "printing houses" ties into a patriarchal government and guild system that legally required printers to work in their own homes for tax and census purposes, effectively combining the private and public spheres into one. For example, English printers were required by the Ordinance of 1653 to exercise their trade "in their respective Dwelling Houses and not elsewhere" (Firth and Rait 696). Women's labor was often invisible except in cases where the men were absent: jailed or dead. While these laws were not enforced in the American colonies, they (and particularly their emphasis on authority and power) have nonetheless shaped our conceptions of books as printed volumes. Adrian Johns similarly notes that the "bifurcated representation of the workplace as a home *and* as a business was consequently made central to the production and reception of printed books" (1998, 125, *italics original*). In other words, the known site of production legitimized a text in a way that the laborers who produced it did not.

In contrast, today's home or self-publishing is now considered among the least respectable forms of literary endeavor, with fan fiction even lower because it is written for pleasure rather than profit. The "home" that was originally identified as the man's purview is now identified as the woman's, and this shift is key to redefining the discourse of public

and private publication. Similarly, shifts in labor resources redefine our perceptions of activity; women's work in the 17th-century print industry combined text with textiles, including sorting rags for quality to be made into paper and sewing paper sheets for pamphlets and book bindings. Women's reading and writing have long been regarded with suspicion. To quote Elizabeth Long, it is always women who read "too much," and this criticism is leveled at both housewives and spinsters: "reading requires social control lest it take over from more worthy pursuits," namely more traditional (and feminine) domestic duties (2003, 13). Writing is equally suspicious, and publication not even to be thought of; redefining the home as the location of these labors subverts the intellectual power of masculine, public discourse. Consider the import of Virginia Woolf's classic text *A Room of One's Own*, which considers space and time to write as necessities.

Further, Woolf herself co-owned Hogarth Press with her husband; she sorted the type for their fledgling press and typeset portions of the works they published; she learned bookbinding at the age of nineteen and continued to bind books throughout her life. And she was not the only one; women were an important part of the Modernist publishing scene. A recent biography of Blanche Knopf by Laura Claridge, *The Lady with the Borzoi: Blanche Knopf, Literary Tastemaker Extraordinaire* (2016), describes in great

detail how Knopf cofounded that famous press with her husband, with whom she too sewed by hand the sheets for the books they published, as well as working as editor and agent, but was systematically written out of the history of the firm. Woolf as writer and publisher likewise speaks to the nature of book as object, with what Lisa Maruca calls "production values": "the social standards or community agreements as to what is worthy of notice and is best to uphold, and likewise what must be repressed in order to maintain these standards—that are promulgated both *through* the act of textual production and *about* textual production" (2007, 7).

When we consider women's history in publishing—whether as writers, typesetters, binders, or other laborers—we need to consider the problems of invisibility. At this point in time, all too often books themselves are not seen; we usually don't consider the sourcing of paper, bindings, ink, etc. because we are so distanced from it. Looking at physical materials means a great deal in considering how they came to be. What, if anything, does it mean that different copies of the same issue of a fanzine are printed on different-colored paper? In some cases, these differentiate editions, while in others it indicates no artistic intention but only what paper was cheapest at the time. On the other hand, some zine producers went to great lengths to obtain high-quality paper and other materials for their zines.

For example, the *Darkover Newsletter*, published by the fan club Friends of Darkover, saw 70 issues over 20 years, with a subscriber base ranging between 100 and 1,000 as Darkover and Marion Zimmer Bradley waned and waxed in popularity. (On Friends of Darkover publications generally, see Coker 2008.) Paper color changed with each issue, and was rarely repeated. Darkover fans I spoke to gave no reason for this beyond a shrug and "Well, that's what we had to work with." Presumably the various lots of colored paper were what they could easily and cheaply obtain. The Friends of Darkover published several titles in addition to the *Newsletter*, including *Starstone*, a serial that lasted five issues; eight different one-shot titles, including *The Darkover Cookbook*; and a small pamphlet with a poem by Bradley called "The Maenads." This last is the single exception I have found to the pattern of their paper usage. It was printed in three editions with different-colored paper covers: the first edition was gray and ran 25 copies, the second was green and ran 75 copies, and the third was yellow and does not indicate the size of its print run. In short, fan work in print requires not only significant labor, expense, and materials, but also the knowledge and expertise to combine these into a print publication.

Fanzine publishing has become more expensive because of declining mechanisms of production, as well as the migration of much of fandom to online forums.

Printed collections of fan fiction have largely been reduced to special publications, sometimes crowd-funded on Kickstarter or similar online venues. Agent with Style, a fan publisher that specializes in reprinting vintage fanzines, must do so with significant markup. For instance, the first issue of the classic K/S zine *Nome*, edited by Victoria Clark, M. V. M. Varela, and Barbara L. Storey, was published in 1979 and displayed no cover price. Used copies have been found priced \$1–\$9; a brand new reprint from AWS costs \$22, or \$29 for overseas orders, though this does include shipping and handling costs. (Other issues with the publisher and its productions have been reported; Most commercial printers today require a minimum number of copies before they will take a job on, with expenses increasing as page counts rise.

Nonfiction fanzines are much shorter than fan fiction zines: 4 to 30 pages versus 60 to 150 pages, on average. The shorter fanzines generally are similar to flyers or circulars, offering book and film reviews and conference information; the larger ones tend to be fiction anthologies. Both are reflective of their primary audiences. Fan fiction fanzines have become an outlet for a niche market of vintage collectors rather than a viable introduction to a fandom, while nonfiction fanzines are aimed at an insular and preexisting audience that is already a community. Because they are intended for very different audiences,

they are functionally invisible to one another's audiences.

The invisibility of the material object becomes a point of erasure: what is not seen becomes nonexistent. A major change in fan publishing in recent years has been the migration from print fiction fanzines to online archives, with a seemingly gender-based segregation taking place at access points. The shorter sf zines, in print and online, tend to be created by men for male audiences, while women fans adopt closed online communities that replicate a form of private space. (A brief survey of Efanazines.com, an online archive that contains pdf copies of sf zines that were once print and have gone digital but maintained their print layouts, demonstrates that most of the readers and writers there are men.) This shift is perhaps best described in a report on the 2014 WorldCon by Gavia Baker-Whitelaw (2014):

During discussions about how to attract a new generation [to] the convention, I'd hear people talking about how the Internet is isolating and incomprehensible—or how it lacked the personal touch of fanzine mailing lists. One audience member asked what had happened to slash fanfic. Why didn't he see it in fanzines any more? What made it die out? Apparently he was unaware of the vast quantity of slashfic constantly being posted online, including in older fandoms like *Star Trek*, which long ago made the jump from print to Internet.

When I read this statement during a conference the following April, the room laughed. To fan scholars, the idea of slash writing having died out is absurd, because of both the quantity of it that is produced daily and the quantity of scholarship studying it that has been produced over the past three decades—but the vast majority of both is by women. That male fans could ask about its supposed disappearance at one of the major genre conventions indicates how very gendered both this form of literature and its points of access are.

A recent uproar (sometimes called "TheoryofFicGate") exposed, in a different way, how the invisibility of female fan space that is assumed, and that is problematic, is changing. An informal (student-led) undergraduate class called "The Theory of Fanfiction" at UC Berkeley upset numerous fan authors by directing students to read and comment on fan stories online. The authors had no warning of this, only learning about the class after some had received comments they found insulting or just upsetting. Gavia Baker-Whitelaw (2015) again summed the case up by saying,

As is often the case in this kind of conflict, the basic problem was a misunderstanding of the difference—and overlap—between private and public Internet spheres. While most fanfic is published on easily accessible platforms, it's often posted with the tacit understanding that it will only be read by its target audi-

ence—and for the most part, it is. Fanfic authors are *definitely* not expecting their writing to be scrutinized by people who aren't familiar with the source material or with fandom in general.

The conversations, debates, and flames that resulted from the assignment drew participants ranging from staffers of the Archive of Our Own (AO3) to acafans including Anne Jamison, Kristina Busse, and Karen Hellekson. Most interestingly for my purposes here, Jamison commented on Tumblr that "I advocate private communities, locked accounts, mailing lists and paper zines for people who value privacy but want to share. It's not just other fans reading here. Maybe it once was, but it just isn't true now." As a book history scholar, I am fascinated by the notion that print zines and print culture are a locked, private form of communication to a privileged few. It reflects our changing notions of publication and of the spaces in which publications are created.

Stigmas of print? Closing a loop in the history of women's writing

As demonstrated above, the norms of print publishing above all else value public access: public publishing, public circulation, public market through public buying and public selling, public reading, public engagement. The average fan text flouts these norms, whether because print zines are sold literally "under the table" at conventions or because fan works are posted to member-only online communities. The meaning of the word *publish*, "to

issue text for sale or distribution to the public," derives from its etymological root, which means "people." This raises a deceptively simple question that has long dogged historians of women's writing: What does it mean to be "published"? Historically, the difference between manuscript publishing and print publishing has rested on the insularity of the intended audience in the private sphere and the public acts associated with the public sphere.

For many years, book historians maintained several truisms regarding the higher quality and value of print: the printed text always existed in more copies than the manuscript text; the printed text was always more stable than the manuscript text; and all copies of the same edition of a book looked just alike. Each of these truisms has been demolished in the last few decades. It was entirely possible for a manuscript text to exist in more copies than a printed text, because there were various restraints (including legal ones) on the number of books that could be printed at one time, while a popular poem, letter, or other text could be copied at will by hand. As happens today on Tumblr, some texts were shared so often that their origins were lost. Note the old aphorism that "Anonymous was a woman."

Indeed, scribal historian Harold Love has argued that the gendered differences in publication created a "stigma of print" against women writers (1993, 54), and so

their retreat into private reading and writing practices became a form of what he calls "bonding" (180), in which literary cliques were formed as conspicuous, gendered acts of exclusion. These coterie practices continued well into the eighteenth century, when both the rise of the novel and the industrialization of print transformed literary production into mass culture. However, this practice of gender-based bonding continues to inform and illuminate social literary production, especially if we consider men's fanzine and women's fan fiction practices in this light. Social bonds create norms within the community that are policed by community members, and these norms extend into the very definition of literary work. When interviewing male fans about fan history in the FanHistory group on Facebook, I was adamantly told more than once that "fan fiction" is not transformative work, but original amateur work, and "it's too bad no one writes it anymore." When I pressed further, a group member stated that the term had been co-opted, that its current usage was incorrect, and that "non-fans are too lazy to come up with their own portmanteaus; according to some dictionaries, 'fanzine' is no longer restricted to SF fandom's publications" because of "lazynes [*sic*] and a disregard for history, and disrespect towards niche interests. All is swallowed by the maw of 'popular culture.'" Not only does the comment reflect territoriality, it implies that authors of transformative works are

not fans. It reveals much about how gender affects whether texts are perceived as literary.

Finally, regarding the stability of text: printed texts were often more unstable than manuscript ones because of the physical make-up of the print workshop. With multiple people setting type and then putting their work together, it was easy to lose words and lines. These errors might be noticed and corrected later in the print run. The academic cottage industry of identifying textual variants and comparing collations is the backbone of studies of individual authors like William Shakespeare or Walt Whitman, and its chimerical goal is to recover a true text, the one supposedly intended by the author. Studies of the stability of fan texts have largely focused on comparing fan fictions to their published print revisions, such as *Master of the Universe* and *Fifty Shades of Gray*. However, there are multiple other avenues for investigating fannish textual stability. Aside from published fan fiction, numerous fics have both gen and slash versions (for example, *Changing Destiny* by Nadja Lee, a movieverse *Lord of the Rings* novel that has a cover showing Aragorn kissing Arwen on the gen edition and Aragorn kissing Boromir on the slash edition) or PG and NC-17 variations. The supposed stability of print is thus less than stable.

If we compare historical coterie manuscript practices to digital fan practices, we see more than one similarity in social lit-

erary production: both feature communities of women writers in their private spaces, their homes, reading, writing, and sharing one another's work. In print fanzines, room was usually left for letters of comment, so that readers could respond to stories. In the early days of the Internet, readers' feedback was usually shared in private e-mails directly to the author, but increasingly sophisticated Web tools have enabled multiple forms of interaction. LiveJournal users could comment on a post, while the AO3 allows users to leave a wordless kudos instead of or in addition to a comment. All of these are "public" in that they can be seen by other members of the community, so readers and writers are fully aware of the reciprocity of these actions. This reciprocity helps to build community, as reading and writing are practices shared by all, and a communal history of that activity is maintained. But it is increasingly difficult to maintain that communal history.

[3.6] The topic of preservation and access continues to haunt readers of both historical and contemporary writing. In many archives, women's manuscripts are listed under the unhelpful cataloging title of "Domestic Papers," a barrier to scholarly access that is only slowly being worn down by academic inquiry. And until recently, the primary difficulty in locating and identifying digital women's writing has likewise been in preservation and access. However, the Organization for Transformative Works, which runs the

Archive of Our Own, has been making progress in preserving fan writing from earlier days of the Internet. In 2012, the OTW launched the Open Doors project, which, together with other efforts at digital and print media preservation, invited maintainers of at-risk fan archives to import them into the AO3. First to be preserved was the Smallville Slash Archive, and the effort has since included over two dozen sites, including the Henneth Annûn Story Archive, a hub of *Lord of the Rings* fandom in the early 2000s, in 2015, and the Due South Archive in 2016. Maintaining access to texts is the first part of literary study; without the texts themselves, we only see part of the story.

[3.7] Print production has spent centuries solidifying itself as the dominant demonstration of literary force, training readers (and writers) to accept very specific codes of aesthetics as defaults, such as the Times New Roman font that is the mainstay of academics and the octavo format codex that is instantly recognizable to genre readers. However, print production is as artificially constructed and gender-biased as any other system, and we should acknowledge this before we think to apply any series of production and consumption "norms" to bodies of writing. Book history as a field has worked to unpack the processes and codes that we use to consider reading and writing practices, and its tools are likewise useful in examining fan works for literary study.

[3.8] As a final anecdote to demonstrate the usefulness of this methodology, I will confess that, as a fan and a scholar, one of the things I do semiregularly is trawl through eBay and various antiquarian book dealer aggregates looking for fanzines. I bring this up because, frankly, book dealers have no idea what to do with fannish material, and this is repeatedly demonstrated by the widely varying prices charged for the same item. For instance, Jean Lorrah's *Star Trek* fan novel *The Night of the Twin Moons* can be found selling for anything from \$25 to \$1,000. It was a very popular title in fandom in the 1970s; it went into at least four printings. It is 158 pages, stapled with paper covers and a strip of black book-tape along the spine, and its front matter states that it is available for \$3 in person and \$3.25 by book rate mail, or \$4.50 for first class. Unlike mass-produced print material, fan publications have no catalogue of standard pricing and no bibliographies that can contextualize them. Book dealers have no guidance of the kind they are used to relying on. But the fanzine is a printed text, and if no one else has a copy for sale, clearly it must be monetarily valuable, right? That the monetary valuation of printed fan fiction, whether in the form of vintage zines or reworked into mainstream novels, contrasts so thoroughly with the literary valuation, which contrasts in turn with the academic valuation, is fascinating to me, and should be

explored further. How do we value fannish writing?

Jack Speer's 1944 *Fancyclopedia* spoke of "fan fiction, sometimes improperly used to mean fan science fiction, that is, ordinary fantasy published in a fan magazine." When Dick Eney published *Fancyclopedia II* in 1959, the definition had become bipartite: "1) Sometimes meaning *by* fans in the manner of pros; that is, ordinary fantasy published in a fanzine. Properly it means 2) fiction by fans *about* fans (or sometimes about pros) having no necessary connection with stfantasy" (56–57; *stfantasy* is an obsolete fannish term for science fiction and fantasy). However, by the mid-1970s the usage had shifted to imply the derivative and transformative works more familiar today; Jacqueline Lichtenberg used the term to describe the stories included in *Star Trek Lives!*, the licensed anthology of fan writing that she coedited with Sondra Marshak and Joan Winston in 1975. This is the meaning most often used today, although older members of the fan community do hold onto the older definitions. In 2004 the *Oxford English Dictionary Online* defined *fan fiction* as "fiction, usually fantasy or science fiction, written by a fan rather than a professional author, *esp.* that based on already-existing characters from a television series, book, film, etc.; (also) a piece of such writing" (<http://www.oed.com/>). Clearly there was a shift in fandom and fannish activity between 1959 and 1975, and while those

years are concurrent with the rise of media fandom through the popularity of *The Lord of the Rings* and *Star Trek*, as well as an increase in the number and proportion of women fans, further work should be done in examining this shift.

The public/private discourse of fannish publication and its inextricable relationship with authorial anonymity is of ongoing concern to both fans and scholars. It is worth noting that the fanzine reprint company Agent with Style seemingly does not reproduce content without permission (though some fans will argue otherwise), meaning that reprint fanzines may be missing elements (stories, art) that

appear in the original. And current scholarly standards for journal articles—and, increasingly, monographs and edited collections—require at least an attempt to contact fan authors prior to publishing discussions of their work. Similarly, access to fanzines in library holdings can be complicated by whether the institution treats the titles as published material (and therefore lists them as periodicals in catalogs) or as private literary correspondence (and therefore lists them in finding aids). Further discussion across various viewpoints can be found in Musiani 2011, Busse and Hellekson 2012, Whiteman 2012, and Kelley 2016.

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Fan Studies and Show sold separately

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Abstract

While this story is one that plays out daily on social media and in contemporary fan works, it also dates back hundreds of years. Here I consider how Christine de Milton's The Book of the City of Ladies (Le Livre de la Cité des Dames) can be read as a reclamatory fan work addressing issues of representation and gender within both the texts it responds to and the larger culture within which the work is situated. Moreover, contextualizing de Milton's work as fan work can help fan scholars by locating fan studies within a broader literary history. By reframing these earlier works of literature as part of a longer history of women's writing that also involves the works being done today within modalities of fan writing, and by reconsidering fan works as part of a historical continuum of women's writing, we, much as de Milton herself did, create a theoretical space that historicizes, contextualizes, and indeed valorizes women writers of both fannish and nonfannish works.

Keyword: culture, cultural studies, fan, international

Introduction

Yet here stand women not simply accused, but already judged, sentenced, and condemned! These are my characters

now, and the characters of fellow fans—I rely on myself, and other fic writers, to push them forward.

Elizabeth Minkel, "Harry Potter and the Sanctioned Follow-on Work" (2016)

A woman enters into a public debate over a problematic yet popular text, arguing that, among other things, it "speaks ill of women" (Blumenfeld-Kosinski 1997, 41). Eventually, frustrated by the debate and by a general climate she finds misogynistic, she channels her thoughts and feelings about the depictions of women in the media into her own work, which strongly references a well-known work by a male author. She creates a text that uses female characters drawn from earlier works to tell a story subverting existing narratives about women, creating a narrative space within which she can see herself reflected.

The woman referenced above is the medieval author Christine de Milton, and her work, *The Book of the City of Ladies* (*Le Livre de la Cité des Dames*), was written in about 1403. As I will argue here, it is possible, and indeed potentially illuminating, to approach medieval texts through the lens of fan studies. In what ways can medieval texts be looked at as fan works? How might the rhetorical tools of fan studies or affect theory aid in further understanding of these texts? Likewise, can we use medieval understandings of literary production to look at modern fan works in order to complicate our contemporary ideas of authorship?

Early in 2016, *Transformative Works and Cultures* published volume 21, a special edition explicitly focused on "The Classi-

cal Canon and/as Transformative Work," with the word "classical" serving as a shorthand for Greco-Roman, medieval, and early modern material. Editor Ika Willis notes that the existence of this conceptual isomorphism [between Classical literature and contemporary fan fiction] suggests a shared practice and, importantly, a shared aesthetic between fan fiction and Classical literature—that is, between one of the most delegitimized, lowest forms of cultural production in the contemporary world and one of the highest and most valued. Attending to the similarities between these two communities of practice thus enables us to invert and displace the high/low binary and to expand and nuance our model of transformative work. (2016, ¶1.3)

Anna Wilson has stated that "there is also a need for a more comprehensive study of immaturity and affect in medieval 'fan fiction'—that is, texts that enter into and consciously engage with the imaginative world of another" (2015, 2). On the medievalist side, the 2016 International Congress of Medieval Studies offered a panel titled "Fan Fiction in Medieval Studies," while several recent articles have also considered the relationship between Shakespeare and modern fan culture. Here, I join that conversation by considering how de Milton's *The Book of the City of Ladies* can be read as an affective, reclamatory fan work addressing issues of representation and gender within both the texts it responds to and the

larger culture within which the work is situated. Moreover, contextualizing her work as fan work can help fan scholars by locating fan studies within a broader literary history.

Contextualizing Christine

Of course, we cannot simply call Christine de Milton a fan author any more than we can unproblematically call her a feminist author, as both are contemporary terms that do not map directly or easily onto earlier periods of history. Many of her attitudes toward gender, though incredibly enlightened for her time, would strike the reader as intensely problematic today, such as her advice to married women at the end of *The Book of the City of Ladies*: "Don't despair at being so downtrodden by your husbands, for it's not necessarily the best thing in the world to be free" (1999, 238). Even the word *author* is fraught terminology when applied to creators of the medieval period—a situation with which fan studies scholars may find themselves intimately familiar. In "Women and Authorship," Jennifer Summit argues for a multiplicity of meanings for the idea of authorship during the Middle Ages, complicated by issues such as modalities of production and dissemination of texts, ideas of originality and authority, and even the idea of literacy (2003, 92–93). For example:

The *auctor*...is abstracted from the material realities of writing; his authority has no beginning or end and appears to stand outside of time. For living writers, in con-

trast, the act of writing was bound up in the wider social and historical networks of patronage, scribal reproduction and circulation. Those networks undermine the apparent autonomy of the *auctor*. (2003, 92–93)

Minnis's *Medieval Theory of Authorship* defines an *auctor* as one whose work was judged to be both "intrinsically worthy" by conforming to accepted "Christian truth," and to be "authentic" by being the work of a known *auctor*, an admittedly somewhat cyclical notion (2010, 10–12). Contemporary ideas of individual authorship driven by individual inspiration and producing what we conceptualize as original work therefore have limited relevance to the medieval period.

The issues discussed above existed for all medieval authors, but the gender politics of the period meant that they had a greater effect on women writers than on their male counterparts. Indeed, in *The Book of Margery Kempe*, a spiritual autobiography and travelogue written in the early 15th century, Margery Kempe's struggle to get her autobiography written down suggests that the very act of creating the text may have served as another form of penitentiary spiritual labor for "this creature"—as Margery describes herself throughout—to endure for the greater glory of God. Margery, who was herself illiterate, was afflicted by a first scribe whose transcription of her story is discovered to be "so badly written that he [the second scribe she brought it to] could

hardly understand it, for it was neither good English nor German, nor were the letters shaped or formed as other letters are," and only her direct divine intercession can "purchase him [the second scribe] grace to read it and also to write it" ([1501] 2001, 4).

De Milton is likely the woman writer of the Middle Ages who hews most closely to our contemporary understanding of what an author is. The general outlines of her life are known, unlike those of Margery Kempe or the possibly pseudonymous Marie de France, thanks to her own semiautobiographical work "The Vision of Christine." Christine makes no negotiated claim to quasi-authority through the medium of divine authority, as female mystics such as Hildegard of Bingen or Julian of Norwich do, but instead grounds her texts in scholarship and learning that, while not wholly analogous to modern scholarship, at least accord with medieval male scholastic practice. Indeed, her literary career began around 1401, when she entered the so-called *querelle de la Rose* and went head to head with some of the best-known scholars in Parisian literary circles to argue about misogyny and misinterpretation in Jean de Meung's *The Romance of the Rose* (*Roman de la Rose*, c. 1230–75), a popular allegorical poem of courtly love. In *The Romance of the Rose*, the male figure of the Lover, aided by figures such as Friend, Honesty, Venus, and Pity, and opposed by figures such as Jealousy, Danger, and

Chastity, must go on a quest to reach, woo, and seduce his love, the (female) Rose. In the *querelle de la Rose*, Christine publicly opposed the work, arguing that "Jean de Meung's negative representation of women leads to disharmony between the sexes and thus to immoral and un-Christian behavior" (Brown-Grant 1999, 10).

Christine has been described as the first professional woman writer, a role that was, interestingly enough, necessitated by both her social class and her gender. These prevented her from receiving the court appointment that many male writers of the period relied on for security—indeed, her father was court astrologer to King Charles V, and it was this appointment that gave Christine access to an exceptional education. She started writing poetry for money after the death of her husband in 1380, and several subsequent lawsuits forced her to start supporting herself and her family financially. Perhaps most importantly from a standpoint of *auctoritas*, she was educated enough to supervise the copying and even illustrating of her own works. Thus, when Christine presented Isabeau of Bavaria, the queen of France, with a copy of her collected works (preserved in the British Library as MS Harley 4431), which is illustrated with a frontispiece depicting a stylized scene of the same presentation, she is in control of both her own text and of her own image, supplying Isabella and future readers with a self-portrait of

Christine as author. This professionalism, noteworthy even during her own time, would seem to be at odds with thinking of de Milton as fan author or of her work as fan work, areas usually defined at least within the popular understanding by their perceived amateurism and distinct lack of monetization. I argue, however, that it is not paid remuneration but instead Christine's attitude to her own work and the works against which she is defining herself that make her also function as a fan author.

Fan fiction is of course also a term, and often a spelling, of some contention. The "most narrowly defined" idea of fan fiction used by Kristina Busse and Karen Hellekson in their introduction to *The Fan Fiction Studies Reader* (2014) is as "(sometimes purposefully critical) rewriting of shared media," a form that they then date to the 1960s. They admit that a wider definition, as a "response to specific written texts," would clearly include medieval and other premodern texts. The widest definition included in their discussion calls it a form of "collective storytelling," in which case fan fiction can be dated back to Homer's *Odyssey* (2014, 6). All three of these definitions can be applied to *The Book of the City of Ladies*, as it responds not only to the larger medieval canon but also to specific, well-known texts, especially Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung's *The Romance of the Rose* (c. 1260) and Giovanni Boccaccio's Latin biographical collection *Famous*

Women (*De mulieribus claris*; c. 1370). However, the above sets of prefatory definitions do not include several aspects of fan works that many fan scholars also consider important to the discussion of such works, and which is of particular importance when considering de Milton: the fact that the majority of fan fiction authors are women and noncisgender men, the role of the community in which the text is designed to be read, the affective nature of fan works, and the potential role of the fan work as a resistant reading to both the dominant text and the dominant culture that is performed by marginalized bodies. As Anna Wilson says, "the affective quality of fan fiction—and its implications—could potentially be overlooked or erased through scholarship that identifies it too readily with classical literature" (2016, ¶2.10). Aja Romano (2016), writing on the popular musical *Hamilton* as fan work, argues, "The fundamental objective of fan fic, especially when it is written by women, queer and genderqueer people, and people of color, is to insert yourself, aggressively and brazenly, into stories that are not about and were never intended to be about or represent you." Christine inserts herself, both aggressively and brazenly, into the quarrels of scholarly men on the merits of the *The Romance of the Rose*. Soon afterward, she produces a book that is part collection of exemplary biography and part a mirror for princes—both genres dominated by male authors. It should be noted that not all fan re-

sponses are inherently resistant; fan works may represent either "desire for 'more of'" (that is, an affirmational relationship with a text) or a "desire for 'more from' a source text" (that is, a resistant reading) (Wilson 2015, 26). These are not mutually exclusive desires, even within the same fan work.

Curating a city of women

Like her contributions to the *querelle de la Rose*, de Milton's *The Book of the City of Ladies* is a response to and a critique of both a specific, well-known text (in this case both *The Romance of the Rose* and *Famous Women*) as well as to themes and motifs extant within the larger literary culture of the period, a relationship with the earlier texts that can be defined, as Henry Jenkins describes contemporary fan fiction, as containing "not simply fascination or adoration but also frustration and antagonism" (1992, 23). In *The City of Ladies*, Christine, in a manner similar to the self-insert allegory of Dante's *Divine Comedy* (1308–21), describes how she is visited by the figures of Lady Reason, Lady Rectitude, and Lady Justice. They explain to her how and why women have historically been maligned by men and enlist her in the construction of an allegorical City of Ladies as safe dwelling place for all women of virtue. To build this city, the Ladies share with Christine examples of historical and contemporary women who are "worthy of praise" (1999, 11). The list includes women rulers, artists, scholars, warriors, in-

ventors, and prophets, in addition to the more typical wives, virgins, and holy women. However, *The Book of the City of Ladies* is not simply a critical response to earlier texts. It is also a stand-alone literary work that affectively answers back to and repurposes the original textual canon sources to create something new and reparative, making it, I argue, explicitly a fan work.

Here, Christine responds to Giovanni Boccaccio's curated and interpreted list of both famous and infamous women in *Famous Women*—"I will adopt a wider meaning and consider as famous those women whom I know to have gained a reputation throughout the world for any deed whatsoever" (Boccaccio 2001, 11)—with her own list of explicitly praiseworthy women while also defending women more generally as being praiseworthy. "Our [the Ladies] wish is to prevent others from falling into the same error as you [Christine] and to ensure that, in future, all worthy ladies and valiant women are protected from those who have attacked them" (1999, 11). Christine also borrows the motif of the walled and thus fortified city so important to *The Romance of the Rose*. One of her opponents during the *querelle*, Pierre Col, had already used this motif, comparing his attacks on her to *Fol Amoureux*'s own actions in pursuing the Rose, who in *The Romance of the Rose* represents both the specific woman being pursued and women in general. Thus Pierre rather creepily cast himself in

the role of the stronger, male, and ultimately successful opponent to Christine and "reiterat[ed] Jean de Meung's representation of women as less than human and a race apart which Christine herself had denounced" (Brown-Grant 1999, 19). However, Christine's *City of Ladies*, unlike the walled garden of the Rose, which exists as an obstacle to be overcome by cunning and treachery, is instead akin to the inviolate City of God described by Augustine of Hippo in his work of the same name (Morse 1996, 232).

Boccaccio does not feel a need to apologize for or justify his choice to write *Famous Women*. Instead, his preface contents itself with noting that "some women have performed acts requiring vigour and courage" (2001, 9), and thus he will write his work as a "way of giving them some kind of reward" (2001, 13), especially pagan women, whom he feels are otherwise underrepresented. These women, while deserving, must still be gifted with representation at the hands of a learned man. Furthermore, unlike his previous collection of biographies, *On the Fates of Famous Men* (*De casibus virorum illustrium*, c. 1360), *Famous Women* does not have an overarching frame narrative, and when Boccaccio chooses to make general asides to his reader, they appear within specific chapters. Christine's frame narrative—which has more in common with Boccaccio's earlier work than with *Famous Women*—offers a vivid description of her despair as she sits in her

study and wonders if she herself, and indeed all women, are truly the "vessel in which all the sin and evil of the world has been collected and preserved" (1999, 6). It is an issue of representation with which marginalized groups within today's media structure would unfortunately still be intimately familiar. "This thought inspired such a great sense of sadness and disgust in me that I began to despise myself and the whole of my sex" (1999, 7). Boccaccio claims to have written *Famous Women* as a favor to women; Christine writes *The Book of the City of Ladies* out of a desperate need to create both a space and a defense for herself and for other women within a culture that condemns them. The work is thus one of explicit community building, not just within the fictional City of Ladies but also beyond the text, functioning, as Anna Wilson says of fan fiction, as a "form of literary response where literary allusions evoke not only a shared intellectual community in the audience but also a shared affective community" (2016, ¶1.4).

In framing his scholarship in *Famous Women*, Boccaccio relies on "learning where I can from trustworthy authors" (2001, 11), thus placing himself and his text firmly within the tradition of *auctoritas*, which is derived from "an affiliation with the past that renders individual authors virtually indistinct from one another" (Summit 2003, 92). Christine references such an authorial tradition in her own opening to *The Book of the City of*

Ladies, comparing other (male) authors en masse to "a gushing fountain" (1992, 4) in a perhaps inadvertently phallic description of the weight of extant misogynistic scholarship, as well as a reference to her own familiarity with this canon, a trait that is both academic and fannish. A close reading of this preface will also note Christine's purposeful framing of herself within the narrative as a scholar, as she begins with a description of herself "sitting in my study surrounded by many books of different kinds, for this has long been my habit to engage in the pursuit of knowledge" (1999, 5). This also echoes Boccaccio's self-presentation throughout *On the Fates of Famous Men* as writing in his study while being visited by ghosts who demand that he tell their stories. She later describes herself to the Ladies as a "simple and ignorant scholar" (1999, 15), using the term *estudiante*, the feminine form of *scholar*, rather than by what might seem the more obvious descriptor of woman, or indeed abjecting herself as Margery Kempe does by referring to herself as "this creature." In explaining her own text, even though she clearly was familiar with and reliant on earlier scholarship much as Boccaccio was, Christine instead frames her narrative as a powerfully affective dream-vision. She describes herself as having a "head bowed as in shame and my eyes full of tears" (1999, 7) by the gulf between her lived experience of womanhood and the contempt with which the male authors she trusted invar-

iably discussed women, convinced "women are guilty of such horrors as so many men seem to say" (1999, 7). In her despair, she is visited by allegorical representations of Lady Reason, Lady Rectitude, and Lady Justice, "crowned and of majestic appearance" (1999, 7), who tell her and teach her of women's abilities and histories, positioning Christine's self-as-character in the role of purposefully obtuse student. Indeed, Christine claims that when these visitors appeared, she "threw herself fully face down in front of them, not just on to my knees...kissing the ground they stood on, I adored them" (1999, 15), an embodied action of humbling, one which it is difficult to imagine Boccaccio making. In *On the Fates of Famous Men*, when Boccaccio is visited by the "laureate poet" Petrarch under similar despairing circumstances, Petrarch merely scolds Boccaccio for his sloth "vicious idleness" (1967, 184) in John Lydgate's 1430 English translation—and Boccaccio returns to writing, having "ouercam thymptent feeblisse / Of crokid age" (1967, 187–88). Petrarch thus functions as both teacher and authorial inspiration. In contrast, the textual framing device of adoration, and to an extent abjection, that Christine uses ties her into the tradition of medieval women's visionary literature, in which "the writer establishes her authority on the basis of her self-effacement" (Summit 2003, 95). While Christine's dream-vision and supernatural visitors would have been understood by readers

as allegorical and not the literal, divine visitation present in visionary literature, Christine still rhetorically places herself as a channel for the work of these ladies in building the City in the way that echoes, for example, Hildegard of Bingen's description of herself as "a feather...not fly[ing] of its own accord; it is borne up by the air" (2001, 1009). Her authority thus derives not simply from her own scholarship but from her role as amanuensis for these three divine Ladies. However, when the Ladies reveal to her that she "alone of all women have been granted the honour of building the City of Ladies" (1999, 12), Christine replies, "Behold your handmaiden" (1999, 16)—a phrase that readers would have recognized as an echo of the Virgin Mary's words upon the Annunciation. This suggests that even when Christine rhetorically humbles herself, it is a careful and controlled action serving a larger purpose within the narrative.

While heavily allegorical, *The Book of the City of Ladies* is also a deeply affective and personal text for Christine, beginning as it does with a vivid description of her emotional state and as it engages in a reclamation both of the specific historical women mentioned by the text and of women as a group, capable of the same virtue and worth as men. Although Christine doesn't explicitly invoke Boccaccio in this introductory section to the *City of Ladies*, both *On the Fates of Famous Men* and its sequel, *Famous Women*, were

sufficiently well known that her readers would have known exactly what she was reworking.

No art she hadn't mastered

Of special interest from a fan studies perspective is Christine's recontextualization of women who have appeared in earlier works as figures of infamy. Throughout *Famous Women*, Boccaccio does not refrain from criticizing women he has included if he thinks that they have overstepped the bounds of appropriate behavior, thus allowing his idea of fame to encompass both exemplars and cautionary tales. Christine solves this conundrum through a combination of selective gathering of examples and, within those examples, an emphatically reclamatory form of storytelling that allows even infamous women to enter the City of Ladies within certain parameters. In this way, she highlights both a scholarly and fannish "high level of knowledge of and insight into its [her] source texts" as well as a willingness to fill in the gaps, performing an "interlinear glossing of a source text" (Wilson 2016, ¶1.4).

One sterling example of Christine's reclamation can be seen by comparing Boccaccio's treatment of the mythological character of Medea to Christine's. To Boccaccio, Medea is worthy of inclusion in his *Famous Women* for being "the cruelest example of ancient treachery" and "the cleverest of witches" (2001, 75). After describing the trail of corpses she leaves, occasionally literally, in her wake, Boc-

caccio finishes his account by using her as an example of the danger of sight and, through sight, of desire:

Certainly, if powerful Medea had closed her eyes or turned them elsewhere when she first raised them longingly to Jason, her father's reign would have been of greater duration as would have been her brother's life, and her virginal honour would have remained unbroken. All these things were lost because of the shamelessness of her eyes. (2001, 79)

Thus in Boccaccio's telling, had Medea not shamelessly lusted after Jason, her father's reign, her brother's life, and her virginity, apparently all of roughly equivalent value, would have been spared such wanton destruction. Having restored her aged father to the throne of Colchis at the conclusion of the narrative, thus restoring appropriate, male dynastic power to the realm, Medea's own narrative ends abruptly with Boccaccio discarding any further concern for or interest in her: "I do not remember having read or heard what Medea did later, or where or how she died" (2001, 79). This stands in contrast to even classical Greek depictions of Medea, who, in Euripides' eponymous drama, is borne into the heavens in a celestial chariot after taking bloody revenge on Jason for betraying her.

Christine includes Medea several times in her *City*, but as an exemplar rather than a cautionary tale. Medea first appears in part 1 as one of the examples given by Lady Reason of the heights of

skill and knowledge to which a woman can rise if given the opportunity: "No art had been invented that she [Medea] hadn't mastered" (1999, 63). Here such ability is not proof of wickedness or witchcraft but merely an example of the skills that might be acquired by a highly intelligent individual of either gender who has been permitted to learn, not unlike Christine herself. Her Medea is not a clever witch but instead a skilled worker of marvels (1999, 63).

Medea appears in a slightly longer entry in part 2 as one of Lady Rectitude's examples of a woman who is constant in her love, alongside other figures such as Dido. Again, the text immediately characterizes her as a princess "supremely learned" (1999, 174). Interestingly, while Christine describes Medea's love for Jason as "undying, [and] passionate," she also claims that Medea was "so struck by Jason's good looks, royal lineage, and impressive reputation that she thought he would make a good match for her," which frames Medea's falling in love with Jason almost as a rational, dynastically appropriate choice for the princess to have made (1999, 174) instead of the lustful, destructive desire condemned by Boccaccio ([1374] 2001, 79). It is not Medea's desiring eyes that drive her to choose Jason but a careful, reasonable process of decision making. Jason is the sole villain of Christine's telling, as he returns Medea's priceless knowledge, aid, and loyalty by breaking his oath to take "no other wom-

an but her as his wife" (1999, 175). Instead of being a supremely violent and unprincipled committer of fratricide, in Christine's telling, it is Medea herself who would have "rather been torn limb from limb" than betray Jason's love. Her chastity, or lack thereof, is also never addressed in Christine's narrative. Christine's account thus ends focused on Medea's faithful suffering at the hands of the unfaithful Jason (1999, 175).

While Christine has clearly made choices in her depiction of Medea meant to shape the reader's understanding of her, this does not place her telling in opposition to earlier tellings of Medea, since, as Ruth Morse points out in *The Medieval Medea*, "no morphology is neutral" (1996, 200). Boccaccio, himself far from a neutral chronicler, had already shaped his own retelling of Medea's story to focus blame on Medea and ignore, excuse, or otherwise deemphasize negative interpretations of Jason. He deliberately chose to leave out some details, included by the classical authors he had drawn from, that addressed Jason's status as a breaker of oaths to Medea as well as his second marriage to Creusa, the princess of Corinth (1996, 200). The difference, thus, is not that Christine recontextualizes the story of Medea but that she does so in a way that valorizes Medea not just as a virtuous woman but also as a virtuous person. Christine's *Book of the City of Ladies* shows that the same texts and tools of analysis used by male authors to denigrate women

can themselves be used to instead validate the characters of women, even those traditionally repudiated by earlier histories. Thus, in fannish parlance, Christine is writing a form of fix-it fic for Medea, where the tragedies and misfortunes visited on her are rooted not in her own sinful nature but in the actions of those around her.

We can see a similar pattern at work in Christine's depiction of other famous women within the Greco-Roman tradition. Boccaccio, once again obsessed with issues of chastity, uses the mythical Carthaginian queen Dido as a way to shame women who remarry, exhorting them, "Let the women of today blush, then, as they contemplate Dido's lifeless body...let them bow their heads in sorrow that Christian women are surpassed in chastity by a woman who was a limb of Satan" (2001, 179). Boccaccio's Dido is clever, mentally strong, morally strong, an excellent ruler, and of distinguished lineage, but to him the importance of all of these virtues are only in their service to her "exceptional virtue and purity" (2001, 173). Wholly ignoring Virgil's episode in book 4 of *The Aeneid*, Boccaccio argues that Dido "had already decided to die rather than violate her chastity" before even meeting "the Trojan Aeneas (whom she never saw)" (2001, 175). Having opened his chapter with the "hope that my modest remarks may cleanse away (at least in part) the infamy undeservedly cast on the honour of her widowhood," Boccaccio has

already positioned himself as a rewriter of Dido's story to emphasize just one portion of it. The moral value of chastity in widowhood is what women should learn from Boccaccio's Dido, and woe betide the woman who fails to live up to her example (2001, 167–79).

Christine's Dido, in contrast, is an example to women because of her "great courage, nobility, and virtue, qualities which are indispensable to anyone who wishes to act prudently (1999, 82). Dido, who rules "gloriously over her city and had a peaceful and happy existence" (1999, 173) is, like Medea, ruined only because she has fallen in love with an unfaithful man. Again, in these examples Christine decouples the danger of love as an emotion from its force as a threat to chastity and instead focuses on her central thesis that virtues are not themselves gendered.

The Princess Polyxena of Troy who inhabits the pages of *Famous Women* is "worthy of remembrance that her tender age, female sex, royal delicacy, and altered fortune could not overcome the sublime spirit of this girl" (2001, 133). Boccaccio's Polyxena's strength of character is at odds with her femininity and is thus even more to be valorized by both Boccaccio and presumably the reader. The Polyxena who dwells within *The Book of the City of Ladies*, though, is described as "not only beautiful but also extremely steadfast and resolute" (1999, 188); her virtues are not divided along lines of gender but are all

of a piece. As Lady Reason explains to Christine, "It is he or she who is the more virtuous who is the superior being: human superiority or inferiority is not determined by sexual difference but by the degree to which one has perfected one's nature and morals" (1999, 23).

Morally impeccable

Christine does not content herself with including paragons of virtue already discussed by earlier male authors or in reclaiming women she thought had been falsely defamed by those selfsame authors. Her *City of Ladies* has room not just for saints, de-deified goddesses, and other characters of the distant or mythological past but also contains women from the recent historical record and, indeed, those who were Christine's contemporaries, such as the duchess of Orleans, "astute in her affairs, fair minded with everyone" (1999, 196), or the duchess of Burgundy, "well-disposed towards others, morally impeccable" (1999, 196). Christine's inclusion of these contemporary virtuous women bolsters her larger argument in several different ways and is also striking in that these women were on opposite sides of the French civil war that had raged through Christine's lifetime. By not confining her catalog of worthy women to the past and by presenting the *City of Ladies* as both contemporary and politically neutral, she again repudiates the scholars who have nothing good to say about the women around them. Boccaccio's *Famous Women* saves praise and ef-

forts for women dwelling in the distant, pagan past, with only three exceptions: two women of Sicily from the 12th century and his own contemporary, Queen Giovanna of Naples, the subject of the book's final chapter. The latter he could hardly leave out, having chosen to dedicate *Famous Women* to a high-ranking lady in Giovanna's court. Christian women, in Boccaccio's telling, while "resplendent in the true and unfailing light" of their faith (2001, 13), cannot be given the same credit for their own accomplishments, since pagan women managed to accomplish their deeds without the "commands and example of their holy Teacher" (2001, 13) that benefited Jewish and Christian women.

By giving readers examples of noblewomen whose reputations they would have been familiar with through the readers' own lived experiences, Christine also encourages the reader, whether a woman or a man, to consider their own lived experiences when judging the potential virtue of both women overall and of any individual woman. As she says in her preface, "I could find no evidence from my own experience to bear out such a negative view of female nature and habits" (1999, 6). This argument from experience, validated by Lady Reason herself, would have been a powerful one for those in her audience, especially women, who were likely to be less familiar with the full canon of classical scholarship, as it firmly places their own lived experience as legitimate source of both authority and

knowledge, an *auctoritas* that derives directly from both Nature and God and is thus capable of supplanting the false *auctoritas* of some earlier male authors. "Our aim is to help you get rid of those misconceptions which have clouded your mind and made you reject what you know and believe in fact to be the truth just because so many people have come out with the opposite opinion" (1999, 8). This framing also immediately contextualizes the value of the lessons and examples that Christine includes, continuing her argument, as seen in the case of Dido, that it is not the deeds of the women that matter but the virtues and values that such actions represent. Thus, as Morse argues, the significance of *The Book of the City of Ladies* is that it deploys allegory for a reinterpretation of history, and women's place in it; it assumes the authority to recontextualize and re-describe the gifts, talents, and deeds of women; in its ambitious intertextuality it appropriates and re-turns the examples of Boccaccio, adding copious "modern examples" to demonstrate women's contribution to the most public aspects of life. (1996, 231)

Christine is reclaiming the exemplary tradition on behalf of women, who had previously only been allowed grudging inclusion, and even then usually as cautionary tales. She is thus, in fanfiction tradition, creating a space within the text in which she can see herself. It, like other fan works, becomes "affective hermeneutics," which "has a particular resonance for

marginal communities whose histories must be read between the lines" (Wilson 2016, ¶4.8)

Conclusion

What is added to the conversation by contextualizing de Milton as a fan author or by considering the fannish modes of expression present in her works? The field of fan studies began as ethnographic studies of fan behaviors and activities, and it is often still heavily focused on contemporary fan practices or those dating back a few decades at most, to slightly prior to what is usually considered the birth of the field with the publication of Jenkins's *Textual Poachers* in 1992. It is often said that fandom itself has a short memory, but at present the same criticism could easily be offered of fan scholars (Coker 2016).

This current lack of larger historicity risks making fan works seem like simply a by-product of contemporary media production, which, when combined with the still extant stigma attached to the work of women, threatens to marginalize fan works by women as mere ethnographic practice rather than as valid literary productions. In much the same way, viewing medieval writing primarily through the lens of the medieval scholastic traditions of *auctoritas* threatens, by nature of its close affiliation with institutions that excluded women, to remove women writers from consideration as authors. Just as looking at the full scope of medieval women's writing "unearths a

range of literate forms and practices that existed outside the schools and their models of *auctoritas*, but held cultural significance" (Summit 2003, 93), looking at fan works as part of larger literary histories opens up lines of dialogue between both these texts and the canonical texts with which they interplay.

Medieval modalities of literary production are of special interest to fan studies scholars because of the ways in which certain earlier concepts of writing and authority map onto contemporary ways of thinking about fan works. Recognizing complicated networks of authorship that may include the patron opens up spaces to consider, for example, the role of contemporary fan exchanges, in which ideas for works are suggested by persons to whom the finished fan works will be gifted. Reconsideration of the role of the compiler, described by de Milton in *The Book of Deeds of Arms and of Chivalry* as "a lawful and praiseworthy matter when material is suitably applied wherein is the master of the material, for therein is the indication of having seen and read many books" (1999b, 144), may aid in conceptualizing the role of those who curate or compile information. This allows us to view fandom wikis or even curated lists with links to recommended works of fan fiction as "more than an act of textual subservience" (Summit 2003, 100). Medieval scholarship offers tools for understanding authorial anonymity "not as a lack of authorship but as a form of authorship with

cultural value in its own right" (Summit 2003, 95). Summit's further discussion of the potential playfulness of a space of nongendered possibility created by such anonymity and coined "epicene writers" (95) deserves to be of intense interest to contemporary fan studies scholars, given both the common anonymity or pseudonymity of many fan works and, more importantly, their production by women, queer individuals, and those who do not identify as cisgender. Most important of all are the ways in which incorporating medieval and other premodern scholarship into fan studies gives us methodologies with which to discuss ideas of *auctoritas* that flow not from originality but from history, tradition, and an affiliation with the past. This decentralizes originality as the most important part of a text and breaks away from the stranglehold that authorial copyright has had on discussions, understandings, or indeed the very valuation of contemporary fan works, both within the academy and within the larger culture. If the field of fan studies begins with *Textual Poachers*, then it also begins with the implicit characteri-

zation of fan works as poaching, a term burdened with connotations of illicitness or even illegality. Methodologies present in medieval scholarship allow us a path away from that constricting framework.

Locating contemporary fan works within extant modalities of literary histories is not intended to validate fan works because fan works are not works in need of validation. Nor is it meant, by the same token, to diminish the work of earlier women authors by tagging them as only or simply works of fan fiction. Instead, by reframing these earlier works of literature as part of a longer history of women's writing that also involves the work being done today within modalities of fan writing, and by the same token reconsidering fan works as "acts of women's literary activity in a continuum with historical practice and historical treatment" (Coker 2016), we, much as Christine herself did in *The Book of the City of Ladies*, create a theoretical space that historicizes, contextualizes, and indeed valorizes women writers of both fannish and nonfannish works.

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The Imagination Convergence Culture and the creating Value in a Networked Culture

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Abstract

Historically, fan scholars have focused on conducting deep dives into singular cases and revealing trends by comparing cross sections of those cases. While there is undeniable value in conducting close analyses of such instances, the reliance on this method can limit our assessment of long-running trends. By supplementing—or, more productively, combining—specific case studies with diachronic perspectives, we can better situate, contextualize, and trace emerging trends like the evolution of fan/producer dynamics. To model this approach, I analyze 4 years' worth of fan-targeted promotional campaigns on the official Milton (2011–) Tumblr. The activities—fannish and/or promotional—of all participants in a shared ecological system like Tumblr are significant. They continuously construct, deconstruct, nuance, and challenge the ever-evolving context of fandom and fan/producer dynamics. Supplementing a close analysis of one of Milton's recent promotional campaigns—the commissioned Milton Exhibit—with a diachronic perspective addresses the ever-evolving ecology of media fandom and traces the evolution of MTV's fannish literacy from 2011 to 2015. The Milton Exhibit reproduces and reflects all the promotional successes, failures, and course corrections that predate it.

Keywords: imagination, creating value, Miltonic Pose

Introduction

On June 25, 2015, the fans, actors, producers, and the off-air creative or promo-

tional team for MTV's *Milton* (2011–) congregated for an unprecedented celebration: a public gallery exhibition of com-

missioned fan art to hype the show's upcoming fifth season. The exhibition was publicized online, held in a professional gallery space, and attended by a mix of fans and industry professionals. In conceptualization, promotion, and execution, the exhibition blende and blurred boundaries between industry and audience, promotion and celebration, and fine and fan art. While *Milton's* postproduction team has openly collected and displayed fan art in-house for years, this event marks MTV's off-air creative team's first foray into the commission and public exhibition of fan art (Twp2013 2014). This event, dubbed Milton Exhibit by the show's official Tumblr account and marketing materials, demonstrates the development of one cult television show's (and, by extension, one network's) strategies to appropriate, monetize, and professionalize fannish modes of production and engagement. If taken as a singular case of industry attempting to contain, sanitize, and legitimize fan art, it is an interesting but not necessarily novel example of increasingly shrewd industrial co-optation. However, when viewed as the culmination of 4 years' worth of MTV's fandom research and development on Tumblr, it becomes indicative of industry's ever-evolving grasp of fannish literacy. Rather than merely appropriating fan works or imitating fannish modes of production, the *Milton* promotional team has gradually learned—by trial and flame—to mimic

their fandom's sense of community and reciprocity.

Historically, fan scholars have focused on conducting deep dives into singular cases and revealing trends by comparing such case studies (Jenkins 1992; Scott 2009; Felschow 2010). While scholars like Matt Hills (2005) have studied the cyclicity and temporal fluctuations of fan engagement, few have conducted longitudinal or diachronic studies on fan/producer dynamics. Paul Booth argues against this approach, explaining, "Rather than looking at or defining fan/industry relations at all, we can only hope to investigate specific sites and moments of interaction. Call it the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle applied to fan studies: We can never know the relationship if we look for it; but we can identify moments when it's happened" (2015, 5).

Further substantiating the difficulties inherent in studying broad shifts in fan/industry relations, Ruth Deller notes that "few studies observe online fan communities over several years, compare multiple platforms or explore technological changes" (2014, 239). Fewer still consider industry's involvement in or development of these shifts. While Deller's own longitudinal study catalogs and compares changes between two groups of music fans over a decade, it primarily considers the shifts in fan activities, perceptions, and communal formations. Similarly, Harrington and Bielby's work on life course and fandom focuses on "self-

unfolding-across-time and fan-object-unfolding-across-time," not industrial dynamics unfolding across time (2010, 443).

This work is vital for theorizing fan engagement across time, space, and life stages, but fans are not the only actors aging and developing with the digital fan ecology. With the mainstreaming of fandom and the move to public platforms like Tumblr, fans and fan practices are

Theoretical approach

If there is one research conceit with which most fan scholars could agree, it is action. By supplementing—or, more productively, combining—specific case studies with diachronic perspectives, we can better situate, contextualize, and trace emerging trends in dynamic relationships like those between fans and producers. This integrated approach allows scholars to address the ever-evolving ecology of media fandom. Tisha Turk and Joshua Johnson (2012) demonstrate the advantages of the use of an ecological model in fan studies, noting that such a model addresses the positions, actions, and interactions of all actors in an ecosystem. As this model tracks affiliations and impacts over time, it allows for a more holistic, representative form of analysis that could be used to supplement current research methods. What makes this model so compelling, however, are the numerous critical threads embedded within it: connection, movement, spatiality, and temporality. Here I intend to pull on that last thread to highlight the significance of

more visible and more accessible than ever before (Gray, Sandvoss, and Harrington 2007). In addition to an influx of new fans, that visibility also leads to an influx of industrial agents in fan spaces. To address the contemporary fan ecology, we must interrogate the role of these industrial agents and track fan/producer shifts over time, and within and across texts, fandoms, industries, and platforms.

that temporality matters. Timing and context play key roles in production and reception, acceptance, and re temporality in fan studies and argue for a diachronic approach that can supplement, provide nuance to, and contextualize case studies.

Turk and Johnson's (2012) approach builds on Marilyn Cooper's ecological model of writing, which explicitly references temporality. "An important characteristic of ecological systems," Cooper notes, "is that they are inherently dynamic; though their structures and contents can be specified at a given moment, in real time they are constantly changing" (1986, 368). This dynamism is compromised when individual incidences and sites of fan/producer interaction are isolated for analysis. Without a diachronic perspective, our interpretive paradigm is unsuited to scrutinizing the adaptive elements of the fan/producer dynamic: the factors that precipitate these cases, the consequences that result from them, and the course corrections that then precipitate the next iteration. By foregrounding

temporality through an ecological model, we can reconstruct these elements—in chronological order, over an extended period of time—and trace the provenance and progression of trends and processes.

While there is undeniable value in conducting close analyses of "specific sites and moments of interaction," reliance on this approach can limit our assessment of long-running trends, especially in relation to the evolution of fan/producer dynamics (Booth 2015, 5). Notably, a focus on isolated incidences can undercut the significance of temporality, historicity, and chronology. One way to address this deficiency is to supplement these analyses with diachronic research models. Combining the traditional case study with a diachronic perspective, an integrated approach benefits from both models: the depth and specificity of close analysis obtain further nuance by the breadth and dynamism of a diachronic perspective.

As I aim to demonstrate here, this approach allows fan scholars to better address generational shifts and memetic dispersions, as well as the development of literacies. It renders visible the ways in which producers learn from and develop alongside fans, as well as the larger technological, political, socioeconomic, and cultural shifts at play. While these aspects can surely be glimpsed in synchronic incidences like specific fan-targeted promotional campaigns, they are better situated and exemplified in integrated analyses that consider the progression therein.

Methodology

Milton's Tumblr was created on March 29, 2011, and this study concluded on November 1, 2015, a time frame that necessitates sifting through over 4 years' worth of data. To contextualize *Milton's* current fan-targeted promotional campaigns, I scanned, analyzed, categorized, and chronologized the entirety of their Tumblr, spanning upwards of 400 pages and 4,000 posts. While the sheer amount of data can be intimidating, the process is as valuable as it is time intensive. All posts on the official Tumblr—original or reblogged—that addressed fan practices and/or fan works directly in the text, content, or tags fell within the scope of this study. This selection includes a cross section of topics, such as posts of fan art and GIF sets, references to fan practices, and acknowledgments of fan-run charity efforts, in addition to solicitations of fan engagement for polls or contests. While not all of the relevant posts are directly addressed in this study, they nevertheless collectively inform and contextualize my analysis of *Milton Exhibit*. By reviewing the entirety of their Tumblr campaigns, I can construct a time-lapse view of sorts—a working timeline that illustrates both the evolution of their promotional approaches and the development of their fannish literacy through trial and error, success and failure. *Milton* is a particularly generative test case for an integrated approach, as it clearly shows how indus-

try can develop fannish literacy over time and mobilize that literacy to great effect.

As an active contributor to the *Milton* Tumblr fandom since early 2011, I have had the opportunity to watch much of this evolution unfold in real time—an opportunity that many scholars share. Since fan scholars are often embedded within our respective fandoms in the long term, we can mobilize our positioning to reconstruct contexts and develop comprehensive perspectives (Hills 2002; Hellekson and Busse 2006; Ford 2014). That perspective has proved invaluable in evaluating how *Milton*'s promotional team has learned to hail fans and mimic fannish modes of production and engagement in progressively more thoughtful and sophisticated ways.

The curious case of *Milton*'s Tumblr

Milton serves as a particularly robust case study for diachronic assessment, as the producers have a long history of engaging fans and appropriating their modes of production and engagement for promotional purposes. Most of this engagement has operated on or through their official Tumblr account. As De Kosnik et al. (2015) explain, "When a fan platform is rising in popularity at the same time that a media text is rising in popularity, this co-occurrence can create a hot scene for fan activity." While Tumblr was introduced in 2007, it took a few years for the platform to become the de facto hub for online fandom. The official *Milton* Tumblr, created in March 2011,

was ideally timed to take advantage of Tumblr's growing popularity with media fandom. Through their official Tumblr and promotional campaigns like #Milton Exhibit, MTV's off-air creative team invites fans to contribute to a corporate ecology that is limited, canonical, and affirmational in scope. However, as the corporate ecology co-opts the fan ecology, there is slippage between the two that results in a complication of these binaries. Essentially, fans' transformative practices—adaptive and unsanctioned by definition—are reconfigured and repurposed to promote a canonical, industrially sanctioned version of the show (obsession_inc 2009). What was once deemed a transformative mode of engagement is instead often rendered affirmational in tone through this industrial co-optation, while the gift/commercial economies and fan/producer dynamics are continuously renegotiated and increasingly intermingled.

Millennial-focused networks like MTV and cult genre shows like *Milton* are often embroiled in these boundary renegotiations. Their promotional practices generally veer into the nebulous realms of transmedia extension, audience participation, and fan co-optation (Hellekson 2009; Lothian 2009; Jenkins, Ford, and Green 2013; Hills 2014; Jones 2014). To use Jenkins's definition, MTV (generally) and *Milton* (specifically) are collaborationists: via their official Tumblr, they experiment "with new approaches that see fans

as important collaborators in the production of content and as grassroots intermediaries helping to promote the franchise" (2006, 138). Grant McCracken, a noted industry consultant, advocates a more participatory approach to promotional practices and audience engagement. He says, "Corporations must decide whether they are, literally, in or out. Will they make themselves an island or will they enter the mix? Making themselves an island may have certain short-term financial benefits, but the long-term costs can be substantial" (McCracken in Jenkins 2006, 137–38). The promotional team behind *Milton* has taken this advice to heart: from the beginning of their show in 2011, they have been an active, and to an extent guiding, presence within the *Milton* Tumblr fandom. While they are hardly the first to do so, *Milton*'s promotional team is notable for its early adoption of Tumblr as well as its iterative, adaptive, and mimetic approach to fannish modes of production and engagement.

The *Milton* Tumblr's trajectory mirrors well-established and studied trends in fandom, progressing from co-optation to containment to commission (Jenkins 2006; Scott 2009; Felschow 2010; Stein 2011; Jenkins, Ford, and Green 2013; Jones 2014; Booth 2015; Busse 2015). However, the linearity of this progression is articulated and emphasized by an integrated analysis, supplementing and contextualizing a synchronic case study with a diachronic

perspective. By situating the *Milton* Exhibit within the larger framework of *Milton*'s Tumblr promotional campaigns, the linear progression of these emerging trends illustrates industry's development of fannish literacy. From each phase (co-optation, containment, and commission), industry is able to learn invaluable lessons about the most productive and organic ways in which to engage their various fandoms. Rupturing that linearity to assess each incident separately disarticulates that adaptive process; conversely, reconstructing the temporal context highlights it.

From 2011 to 2013, the *Milton* Tumblr co-opted fannish modes of production with a number of fan fic and fan art contests. By 2014, they progressed to containment, attempting to redirect fan engagement from Tumblr to an industrially controlled third-party site, MTV's Collective. The most recent stage, beginning in late 2014 and continuing through 2015, marked a move toward legitimizing fan works through commission and exhibition. This evolution demonstrates shifts from denigration to legitimization, from exploitation to professionalization—trends that may not be as evident in case studies alone. To analyze the most recent stage—commission—without understanding the progression of these trends would be to divorce the examples from their context. The synchronic approach, generative as it may be, risks negating the importance of chronology and temporal-

ty, while rendering invisible the industry's ongoing development of fannish literacy.

To address those limitations, I contextualize one of *Milton's* recent promotional campaigns—the commissioned Milton Exhibit—within the larger tapestry of *Milton's* official presence on Tumblr and their fan-targeted promotional campaigns. This integrated approach will couch an exceptional case study within a diachronic framework, texturing each component with insights garnered from 4 years' worth of MTV's research and development on and within their Tumblr fandom. Diachronic analyses are accretive; similarly, this approach reveals that the case study is cumulative: the Milton Exhibit reproduces and reflects all the successes, failures, and course corrections that predate it. To make these implicit connections explicit and to demonstrate the value of an integrated approach, I use the Milton Exhibit as a lens to bring into focus and denaturalize the evolution of MTV's fannish literacy on Tumblr.

Milton Exhibit

During the 10-month break between seasons 4 and 5, the promotional team behind MTV's *Milton* developed a new marketing tactic. Led by Jim deBarros, MTV's vice president of Off-Air Creative, they reached out to well-known *Milton* fan artists (eight women and one man) and commissioned them to create fan art promoting the upcoming season. The resulting works were dis-

played—though not sold—at a June 2015 exhibition in New York City as well as shared with the fandom via the official Tumblr. They also solicited unpaid submissions from Tumblr fans for informal display at the same event. This campaign, tagged as the Milton Exhibit, was promoted through a plethora of social media outlets but was hosted by the official Tumblr.

Jenkins explains that industry's entrée into fannish spaces and modes is facilitated and expedited by the very infrastructure that fans developed for their own creation and circulation practices. The most effective way for industry to engage fans through this infrastructure is by "creating a space where they can make their own creative contributions, and recognizing the best work that emerges" (2006, 173). The Milton Exhibit exemplifies this tactic: while the official Tumblr serves as a digital space to showcase the creative contributions of fans, the official gallery exhibition is a physical space that confers recognition upon their carefully curated collection of the "best" works.

The campaign had five components, each of which bears the influence of previous promotional successes and failures on Tumblr. These components, analyzed in chronological order, are the commission, invitation, advertisement, exhibition, and circulation of the fan-made artworks. Analyzed in concert and in conversation, they represent a diachronic accumulation of the tried and tested strate-

gies that the *Milton* promotional team honed on Tumblr between 2011 and 2015.

Commission

Though the *Milton* Exhibit included both commissioned and solicited fan works, *Milton's* promotional team first contracted fan artists to create the paid promotional materials. Some of these artists had participated in previous promotional campaigns. Swann Smith, a professional artist, was previously contracted by *Milton's* off-air creative department to develop a bestiary for the fictional Argent family. The bestiary—a fan art compilation of all the monsters relevant to the show's mythology—has been featured in the show, but it was originally commissioned as a limited-edition collector's item for fans; 8,500 copies were gifted to fans at the 2014 San Diego Comic-Con (Smith 2015a). Jessica Short, another previously contracted fan artist, won the TW Creature Feature contest in 2015.

In this AT&T-sponsored competition, fans were asked to develop and design a monster to appear in the upcoming season. As with most contests involving development of creative materials, all copyrights were immediately forfeit. This was explicitly stated in the official rules through an unfortunate turn of legalistic phrase: "Sponsor shall have the right to exploit the Entry in perpetuity worldwide in any and all media (whether now known or hereafter invented. As Kristina Busse observes, "Fan campaigns and contests...always seem to offload all the risks

to the fan creator while reserving all the rights to the property owner" (2015, 112). In the case of *Milton* Exhibit, MTV—as the client—again assumed the exclusive rights to each commissioned piece, but they compensated the artists for their labor (Short 2015).

This marks a change in *Milton's* modus operandi concerning fannish promotional campaigns. Previously, they held fan contests (art in 2011, fic in 2012) that violated the tenets of a gift economy as fans submitted their entries without compensation or acknowledgment. Their lukewarm reception is indicative of fandom's indifference toward asymmetrical attempts at engagement. With the shift from appropriation to commission, however, the *Milton* promotional team demonstrates an awareness of these concerns and of the importance of reciprocity in fandom. Indeed, this commission-for-exhibition model is reminiscent of the tradition of fan commissions, in which fans request works in exchange for similar works or minimal compensation. While some of these fan commissions are exchanged privately, most are shared communally in a manifestation of fandom's gift economy. By commissioning fan works and then sharing them via the exhibition, the promotional team is demonstrating both a calculated move away from appropriative contests and a growing knowledge of prevalent fan practices and social norms.

While the commission model and its professional framing as client and artist

(rather than industry and fan) risk divesting the exchange of its attendant fannish affiliation, it also implies a rare recognition and valuation of fan work as labor. It also explicitly professionalizes the fans and monetizes their work. Though not all commissioned artists were chosen for their previous experiences with the show's fan promotions, they were all chosen with an eye toward professionalization. In addition to selecting artists representing a variety of styles and media, *Milton's* promotional team sought out fan artists "who were pursuing a professional career in art" (Delhagen 2015). In keeping with the reframed client-artist dynamic, each fan was given a creative brief to guide their creations. As explained by deBarros and corroborated by four of the artists, they were each given specific guidelines for the artwork: color preferences, style guides, broad plotlines, and season taglines (Delhagen 2015; Indy 2015; Short 2015; Smith 2015b; Swezey 2015). These guidelines dictated not only form and tone, but also content.

All of the characters, pairings, and situations depicted in the resulting fan works are canonical. Noncanonical or fanon content is contained by way of exclusion. By leveraging their power to select the artists and specify the types of work created, industry is able to create a corporate ecology that precludes the feminist, queer, and racialized politics endemic to fandom, especially as seen on Tumblr. Karen Hellekson illustrates this

uneasy relationship: "Commodification squeezes and constrains because it serves the interests of a third party; fans comply as a term of use" (2015, 130). Fan art is a traditionally fan-directed, transformative mode of engagement. When created in a corporate ecology, like the Milton Exhibit commissions, the artwork's transformative potential is neutralized and rendered largely affirmational (Stork 2014). While the commission-for-exhibition model demonstrates a progressive evolution of *Milton's* fannish literacy and promotional strategies, the presence of industrial guidelines blurs the boundaries between transformative and affirmational, as well as commission and containment.

Invitation

After the off-air creative team commissioned the promotional works, *Milton's* promotional team took to Tumblr to promote the upcoming event. On June 19, 2015, they posted an invitation for the upcoming gallery exhibition (figure 1). The temporality of the invitation is interesting. By posting it 10 days before the start of the new season, the invitation itself became a promotional paratext for season 5, especially in relation to the solicited, informally displayed pieces (Gray 2010). Even if the invitation cycled through a Tumblr user's aggregated feed with no context and no follow-up in the days preceding the exhibit and premiere, its clear branding (the show's stylized title as well as the image of the titular character) hyped the show on a superficial level. The

short time frame between invitation and exhibition narrowed the time frame for fans to react negatively to the solicitation of unpaid fan art. Previously, their contests gave fans a few weeks' notice to create and/or submit their works. The promotional team also demonstrated their understanding of Tumblr's affordances by providing the invitation in a JPG format. On Tumblr, an image is easier to share and reblog than a text post, though less searchable. To mitigate the decreased search functionality, the invitation promoted the desired hashtag for the campaign: Milton Exhibit. This tag branding, first used with the #TWCreatureFeature contest, allowed them to easily track submissions and metrics for this campaign. It also allowed their promotional team to keep tabs on one small corner of the ever-evolving tagging conventions used by *Milton's* Tumblr fandom.

To entice fans to share and reblog the invitation, they included one of the commissioned art pieces on the left side. While this work illustrates the kind of art and the level of skill to be celebrated in the exhibit, it also promotes one of the VIP guests: the titular Milton, Scott McCall, played by Tyler Posey. Together with the textual elements, the artwork invites attendees to "join Jeff Davis and Tyler Posey." In addition to the attendees and the artists, the kickoff of the exhibition boasts attendance from show runners (Davis), actors (Posey), and executive producers (both), as well as press and

promotional team members. Notably, neither the art nor the artists are pitched as the main draw. For one night, the boundaries that separate these constituencies were renegotiated to the point of nonexistence. As Bertha Chin explains, "The rise of social media...incited the media industry to engage with their core audiences more creatively in order to maintain the loyalty and interest of the consumers," allowing "media industry professionals...and fans to co-exist within the same symbolic space" (2013, 88). However, like fan conventions, this event relocates these interactions from symbolic to physical spaces.

At the celebratory kickoff, all attendees were able to intermingle and interact among elevated fan art at the Art Directors Club. Though increased interaction between fans and producers is hardly novel in an era of integrated marketing, social media, and fan conventions, the move to a physical space is relatively new one for *Milton*. The creative team has attended a fair number of fan conventions and awards shows, but the team has rarely interacted with fans in such close and formal quarters. As Larsen and Zubernis explain, this momentary relaxation of barriers brings "fans and creators together in a carnival atmosphere that challenges accepted boundaries between fan and producer" (2012, 21). However, unlike conventions, where performers are "presented to the fans under highly ritualized conditions," the professional gallery exhi-

bition presents fans and fan practices under highly ritualized conditions (22). In so doing, the Milton Exhibit is not just attempting to normalize and sanction (selected) fannish modes of engagement and artwork; the event also attempts to normalize and sanction (selected) fans. Controlling fandom—especially the fluid and amorphous Tumblr fandom—is impossible. However, by dint of their institutional power, industry can set the stage, select the actors, and determine the rituals needed to perform a sanctioned and sanctified mimicry of fandom.

The influence of previous Tumblr campaigns is most obvious in the invitation's language. The invitation uses expressly formal vernacular, befitting the opening of a formal art exhibit. Here, fans are "cordially invited" to "the grand opening" of a fan art exhibition, which in itself implies a demonstration of notable and considerable artistic skill. The exhibit, "showcasing a collection of works," would open on June 25, 2015, for their "viewing pleasure." Typically, the language used on the Tumblr displays a studied informality: the promotional team has attempted to cultivate a fannish persona that utilizes fan lingo and exemplifies the informal "feels" culture of Tumblr (see Stein 2015). John Caldwell notes that this practice is widespread, as "corporate employees—operating as stealthy lurkers and identity poseurs—actively masquerade along online fandoms and audiences" (2011, 298). As such, the reversal in tone is

telling. Through its rhetoric, *Milton's* promotional team is performing an elevation of fans and their works that has been heretofore lacking: instead of the typically affected informality, this formality implies and performs their recognition of and respect for not just the art but also the artists. This shift in tone is a marked correction of previous impropriety, especially in comparison to the occasionally dismissive address of *Milton's* show runner and executive producer, Jeff Davis (note 1).

The invitation also instructs fans to use the designated hashtag (deployed to brand, consolidate, and measure entries) when submitting fan art for a slideshow at the grand opening. The most telling and contradictory linguistic move, however, is the foregrounding of fannish identities. While the people who created the fan works were framed as artists during the commission process, their fannish identity is prioritized by the invitation's language: "a collection of works from *Milton* fans across the globe." The discursive shift from artist/client to fan/producer is certainly understandable when promoting a self-proclaimed "fan art exhibit," but, intentionally or unintentionally, it shifts the balance of power in the producer's favor.

Advertisement

Approximately 4 days after the invitation was posted on Tumblr, MTV began showing the commissioned fan art on their billboard in New York City's Times

Square (figures 2 and 3). The fan works were displayed, night and day, for the week leading up to the premiere of season 5. The visibility of these commissioned works cross-promoted both their imminent exhibition and the upcoming premiere. The results of *Milton's* various promotional campaigns were on a gradual trajectory toward visibility over the preceding 4 years, a trend that has mirrored the mainstreaming of fans and fandom. Early fan art contest submissions were only shared on the official Tumblr, while the winning submission from the TWCCreatureFeature contest was incorporated into the show for all fans and viewers to see—though, notably, it was not marked as a fan contribution. The Milton Exhibit is the culmination of this push toward visibility: fan art does not get much more visible than being projected, in lights, on the side of a New York City skyscraper, not to mention the subsequent exhibition in a public venue. It is worth noting, though, that this visibility is simultaneously local and spreadable, contextualized and decontextualized. Images of the fan art projected in Times Square were posted and circulated within Tumblr fandom, retaining their context while expanding their visibility both online and in real life. In Times Square, however, the population of New York City viewed the fan works out of context—except for the blatant "fan art" label affixed to the bottom right side of each piece.

As figures 2 and 3 illustrate, this "fan art" label is literally and figuratively intrusive, effectively othering the art by highlighting its origin. By indiscreetly tagging fan art as such, the promotional team is at once differentiating the fannish works from the professional key art and performing community through the embracing of fans. As noted with the reversal between artist/client and fan/producer dynamics, industry alternately uses "fan" as an enticement, an endorsement, and, here, as a qualifier. While the exhibition of these works through official channels (Tumblr, the art venue, billboards) grants fans a modicum of industrial legitimization, it ultimately benefits the industry. The promotional team is simultaneously rewarding and encouraging future participation in these Tumblr-based promotional campaigns while branding *Milton* (and by extension MTV) as a collaborationist property able to gain traction in a hypermediated culture.

Exhibition

The overall exhibition, including both the grand opening and the week-long display, is a relentless exercise in industrial legitimization of fan works and fannish modes of engagement. Originally scheduled to run from June 25 to July 2, 2015, it was later extended until July 16, 2015. The grand opening occurred just 4 days before the season 5 premiere. Like the invitation, the event itself became a promotional paratext for the upcoming season. The exhibition was hosted by

MTV and the Art Directors Club, and was held at ADC's New York studio. ADC, a well-regarded venue, is an exceedingly appropriate choice for an exhibition of promotional art. The club was founded in 1920 by Louis Pedlar to "ensure that advertising was judged by the same stringent standards as fine art" (<http://adcglobal.org/about/what-is-adc/>). Both ADC and MTV share a vested interest in the viability and visibility of promotional art. More of this art was on display at the grand opening than at any other time, as the solicited fan art submissions were also displayed via slideshow. Though these additional fan works were not created according to MTV's creative brief, they were selected with the same canonical and affirmational guidelines in mind.

As noted in the invitation, the guest list comprised a variety of stakeholders: fans, artists, actors, show runners, producers, press, and promotional team members. However, rather than the art on display, the main attraction of the celebratory event was the question-and-answer session with Tyler Posey and Jeff Davis, shifting attention toward those with industrial authority. In fact, upon entering the venue, attendees encountered a framing quote from show runner Jeff Davis (note 2) (figure 4). On this plaque, he simultaneously commends the artists for their fannish affection, legitimizes their "works of art," and reifies his industrial authority:

It's one thing to watch a tv show and enjoy it as an hour of entertainment. It's quite another thing to be so inspired by it that you go off and create your own works of art. More than glowing reviews or ratings, these incredible pieces of artwork might be the greatest compliment fans can give the creators and artists behind their favorite show. It inspires us. It makes us want to do better. It makes us proud that maybe we've done a few things right. And most of all, it makes us want to keep inspiring you.

While clearly trying to frame the event respectfully, Davis emphasizes the centrality and authenticity of the show in relation to the derivative works it inspired. Despite their intermingling and their incorporation of fans, the *Milton* creative and promotional teams shore up their position of authority. By legitimizing the fan art in the Milton Exhibit, they demonstrate their singular ability to confer that endorsement. Industry may truly value fandom and fan art, but there is no mistaking that the imbalance of power in the industry/fandom dynamic is always in industry's favor. Laura Felschow elaborates: "Producers have exercised control over online fans by inviting them to the party before they can crash it" (2010, ¶4.4). With the exhibit's symbolic acknowledgment of fans, MTV is encouraging continued consumption and participation while also attempting to foster goodwill with an often fractious fandom.

Beyond the grand opening, the Milton Exhibit embodies two threads that run throughout their promotional strategies: collection and exhibition. The works displayed in Times Square and in the ADC gallery were selected from a pool of commissioned works, carefully chosen for their artistic skill and adherence to canon. As the invitation clearly proclaims, they are presenting "a collection of works from *Milton* fans across the globe." The explicit reference to a "collection" and the curatorial process it implies is a refinement of previous failures to collect and contain fan art. In June 2014, *Milton*'s promotional team bundled a fan art compilation booklet with the DVDs. These works—a collection of contest submissions—were used without consent from or compensation to their creators. Three days after the DVDs were released, the *Milton* promotional team launched an MTV-controlled fan archive called The Collective (figure 5). Despite attempts to frame it as a venue for the collection and exhibition of fan works, The Collective was a transparent move to enclose and contain fan practices—a move that echoes previous attempts to professionalize and/or monetize fan works.

One of those previous attempts, FanLib, demonstrates the industrial desire for control over fan platforms as well as the importance of timing with such attempts. FanLib, a for-profit, multifandom fan fic archive, was created in 2007 by industrial agents. The Web site, a transpar-

ent money grab, was defunct by 2008. It was highly criticized, in large part because of its draconian terms and conditions: once fans submitted their work, they forfeited their rights to their work yet retained the risk of copyright infringement (Hellekson 2009; De Kosnik 2009; Scott 2009; Busse 2015). However, timing played a key role in its failure. FanLib was introduced nearly simultaneously with the extensive and invasive issues around industrial censorship and containment highlighted by LiveJournal's so-called Strikethrough debacle (Busse 2015). In 2007, LiveJournal—one of the main loci of online fannish activity before Tumblr—deleted hundreds of journals and communities on the basis of claims of rape, incest, and underage pornography in fan works, despite the relative privacy afforded by age restrictions, password protections, and locked communities. Six years after fandom effectively shut down FanLib's attempt at enclosure and control, *Milton* fans—already incensed by the appropriative fan art booklets—followed suit with MTV's The Collective.

[9.7] An abject failure, The Collective was shut down within the year amid vociferous criticism. Shieldsexual (2014), one of the many fans who advocated for the site to be dismantled, articulates the reaction of many fans: "[Moving] fandom into an area where they have *more* control...[and] you don't hold the rights to your work...is totally gross and inappropriate on their part. They

aren't the first ones to try this bullshit either, they're just cloaking it in different words." Indeed, as Louisa Stein has shown, ABC Family has created similar industry-controlled fan spaces. These spaces complicate "traditional perceptions of authorship, but at the same time...potentially [contain] and [limit] authorship to that which is encouraged by or allowed by the official interface," the official terms of use, and/or the official party line (2011, 133). Like FanLib, MTV's The Collective was an ill-advised and poorly timed power grab.

[9.8] Unlike the creators of FanLib, however, *Milton's* promotional team learned a valuable lesson amid the wreckage of their archive: the exploitation of fan labor, regardless of legalities, is as ineffective as it is impolitic. Participation in a shared ecological system like Tumblr necessitates a degree of reciprocity. As Christopher Kelty argues, in digital spaces and in the new media landscape, "participation is now a two-way street" (2013, 23). Modes of containment, like FanLib or The Collective, violate the expectation of reciprocity and thus the tenets of a participatory culture. By rupturing the unspoken rules that structure fandom's gift economy, promotional teams are effectively disincentivizing the participation they need and disrespecting the fandom they are attempting to integrate. However, by initiating and acknowledging that breach of conduct, *Milton's* promotional

team was subsequently able to correct their course.

[9.9] Fresh off the failure of The Collective, the promotional team's framing of the Milton Exhibit appears much more deliberate and corrective. Rather than repeat the same mistakes, they modified their approaches to production, exhibition, and circulation. Instead of exploiting contest and The Collective entries for promotion and profit, they commissioned fan artists from within Tumblr fandom and paid them for their labor. Rather than assuming control over the digital and physical spaces in which the art is displayed, they partnered with a third party to host the event on neutral (even auspicious) ground: the fan art was exhibited in a professional gallery (figure 6), implying value as well as encouraging a slippage between fan and fine art. As much as the previous contests and The Collective were transparent efforts to control and monetize fan art, the Milton Exhibit was just as obviously framed as a formal, professional event to celebrate fan artists and their artwork. The promotional team behind *Milton's* Tumblr had learned its lesson through trial and flame, and they wanted fans to know it. Thus, as the pièce de résistance of the Milton Exhibit (and arguably their most fan-literate promotional move to date), they shared all of the commissioned works on Tumblr.

In the time between the grand opening of the exhibition and the start of season 5, the commissioned works were posted on

the official *Milton* Tumblr so they could circulate freely throughout the fandom. They were also made available on the personal Tumblrs of the various fan artists. At a practical level, this circulation allows the fans who do not live in the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut to view the fan art, which widens the promotional net for the premiere. At a strategic level, however, the move from controlled exhibition to chaotic circulation acknowledges fans as not "simply consumers of preconstructed messages but as people who are shaping, sharing, reframing, and remixing media content in ways which might not have been previously imagined" (Booth 2015, 2). It also allows the *Milton* Tumblr promotional team to mediate and officiate the final act of legitimation, reifying their position of power in the fan/producer dynamic. Indeed, the refrain of validation carries through the Tumblr posts, each of which is tagged as "an official fan-made promo image." While the decision to circulate the commissioned fan art through Tumblr fandom reaffirmed the fan/producer boundaries, it also blurred the distinction between gift and commercial economies.

[10.2] In fact, the entirety of the Milton Exhibit (commission, exhibition, and circulation) renegotiated the boundaries between gift and commercial economies. Traditionally, fandom has operated on a gift economy marked by reciprocity and obligation that at once engender and

maintain a cohesive communal structure (Hyde 1983, 66–67). As Karen Hellekson notes, the value of gifts is their ability to establish social ties because they are not (as) meaningful outside of the fannish context (2009, 115). In this context, the capital worth of fan works is replaced by communal value. However romantic that notion, it is worth noting that fandom has also engaged in a gift economy out of necessity. Because of the derivative nature of fan works, copyright and intellectual property laws prohibit creators from benefiting financially from their creations—unless, of course, they can prove that creation to be transformed in a manner of "productive use" (De Kosnik 2009, 122). Or, as this case illustrates, unless the fan artists are operating within an officially sanctioned sandbox. In a commercial economy, however, capital is king, and fan works are often leveraged for monetary worth rather than communal value.

Fan studies often harbors a moral dualism in relation to economies (e.g., beloved gift economy, exploitative commercial economy). Hyde's (1983) conception of a gift economy in particular complements the communal ethos of fandom. Tumblr's technological affordances provide a different iteration of this gift economy—gifts are primarily visual in nature and shared through reblogging—but maintain the tenets of community and reciprocity. This iteration also affords industry an opportunity to participate in the gift economy. Rather than co-opting

fan labor, removing it from its communal context, and exploiting it in a commercial economy, the *Milton* promotional team has clearly learned to mimic those central tenets of community and reciprocity. By posting the commissioned fan art on their official Tumblr, they are effectively preserving their communal context and participating in their fandom's gift economy. In fact, as many fans follow the official Tumblr—to access their steady stream of fan-made GIF sets, if nothing else—the posting of the commissioned fan art allows for a wider circulation than unsanctioned channels could achieve.

By circulating within the Tumblr fandom, these commissioned fan works are simultaneously producing commercial and communal capital. As marketing materials, they are generating promotional (and by extension commercial) capital. As expressions of fannish affect, they are gifts circulating freely throughout the community. However, as Suzanne Scott cautions, these gifts are not without strings: they allow industry to "regift a narrowly defined and contained version of fandom to a general audience" (Scott 2009, ¶1.6). Despite its celebratory framing, the *Milton* Exhibit does contain and sanitize fandom. However, as a course correction from the debacle of *The Collective*, the *Milton* promotional team attempted to minimize the industrial containment somewhat by allowing the artists to post the commissioned art to their personal Tumblrs as well. On the official

Tumblr, they also took care to recognize each artist, linking back to their respective Tumblrs. This concerted effort to respect the community and reciprocity characteristics of fandom and its gift economy is indicative of the ways in which the *Milton* Tumblr promotional team has developed its fannish literacy over the last 4 years.

Conclusion

As demonstrated throughout my analysis of *Milton*'s most recent fan-centric promotional campaign—the commissioned *Milton* Exhibit—the promotional team's current strategies can be traced back through previous incarnations, successes and failures alike. A diachronic perspective evidences how the *Milton* promotional team progressed from the blatant co-optation of contests through the ill-advised containment of *The Collective* to ultimately arrive at commission. In this new phase, they solicit—rather than misappropriate—fan works and compensate fan artists for their work, an arrangement that recognizes fan labor by way of professionalization and monetization rather than exploitation and domination. While the next phase of their promotional progression remains to be seen, it too will bear the marks of the preceding campaigns and serve as culmination of the lessons learned. Without a thorough, chronological record of *Milton*'s previous attempts to elicit and encourage participation in their Tumblr fandom, it would be difficult to recognize and track the ways

in which their promotional strategies were honed and refined between 2011 and 2015. With the benefit of a diachronic approach, however, the context that forms and informs industry's promotional practices is readily apparent. While it is impossible to definitively state whether or not these changes reflect a genuine change in *Milton's* or MTV's conceptualization of fans, they do demonstrate the development of their fannish literacy. Though Tumblr fandom has abandoned the fan mentorship model, industry has not: they are constantly observing and mimicking the codes, norms, and practices they see in fandom. Supplementing a close analysis of the Milton Exhibit with a diachronic perspective makes plain the evolution of this literacy.

In any ecological or diachronic study, "context is not something that simply exists; it's something that the participants in the ecological system create through their various fannish activities and, importantly, the textual traces of those activities" (Turk and Johnson 2012, ¶2.6). The im-

portance of context and temporality, as the basis of fannish literacy and the value of a diachronic perspective, cannot be overstated. However, it is shortsighted to limit the definition of participants to fans only. The activities—fannish, promotional, or both—of all participants in a shared ecological system like Tumblr are significant. They continuously construct, deconstruct, and challenge the ever-evolving context of fandom and fan/producer dynamics. Without a more holistic study of all the moving parts that comprise various fandoms, we will not be able to develop holistic understandings of larger trends such as legitimization, monetization, and professionalization. More pressing, perhaps, is the concern that we will not be able to keep pace with the rapidly adapting industry. If they are indeed adopting and refining fannish literacy skills in order to operate more effectively and organically within fandom, fan scholars need to adopt research models and designs that are better equipped to evaluate that adaptive process.

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The concepts of Deictic Shift Theory and Discourse Theory of Silencing

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Abstract

This paper aims to analyze the concepts of the deictic shift theory and discourse theory of silencing. It has been written on the basis of synchronic descriptive method in the study of the English language. For this purpose we wish to introduce a theoretical framework for the study and then we hope to present the deictic shift theory and discourse theory of silencing, to show the development of a set of questions that any reader may use to evaluate a work of fiction. It is noted in the article that while using the language in the narrative, these questions help to guide the reader to determine the context of the narrative. These questions also help the reader to determine the narrator's point of view, his strategy for silencing characters, and discover which characters in the narrative have been silenced. It is stated in the article that deixis depends on context, situation, and relationship within a narrative and Deictic Shift Theory is a set of premises about readers and stories that grew out of research on the function of deixis in fictional narratives. The article also covers discussion of linguistic views of scientists in this field. The article is also of both theoretical and practical importance in the view of learning English and developing the science of linguistics as a whole.

Keywords: deixis, narrative, deictic words, anaphora, cataphora, narrator, social deixis.

I. Introduction

As human speech is realized in a certain situation, condition and environment, human beings use the language in order to establish intercourse with one another. The initial and the first function of a language is to transfer a certain piece of information. This is called a transactional function in linguistics. Languages help human beings to give information by order, request and instructions to one another. The whole scope of actions, carried out as a result of these processes in the language, is called context. It becomes clear from the context, who is pointing to somebody or something by special words which are called deixis: here, there, I, you, he, this, that, down, up etc. Deictic words just carry out deictic function. In modern linguistics the word "deixis" has derived from the Greek word *deixnumi*. It gives the meaning of "to indicate", "to show", "to point to."

By deixis is meant the location and identification of persons, objects, events, processes and activities being talked about, or referred to, in relation to the spatiotemporal context created and sustained by the act of utterance and the participation in it, typically, of a single speaker and at least one addressee. The word "deixis" traditionally is as to the semantics nearer to the "indexial expression" in linguistics. The analysis of recent studies in this field provides us with argument that deixis is a means, uniting

semantics with pragmatics, because, language expressions are set up by means of pragmatic substitutions.

II. Scope of Study

Deixis is a linguistic term for some units of language. These units of language indicate a self-world orientation. In this orientation the elements of language have the meaning when the reader knows who, when, and where the speaker or character can be in the narrative.

Galbraith describes that the reader needs a "reference to a NOW, a HERE, and an I" for full comprehension. He considers the deixis not to be limited to a few words, such as I/you, here/there, now/then. According to Galbraith, deixis functions in all discourse as the "prerequisite for all reference," and, most importantly, it functions as the indicator of the subjective perspective in language (Galbraith 22-23).

Deixis depends on context, situation, and relationship within a narrative. Every language contains words like I/you, here/there, now/then, this/that, yesterday/today/tomorrow which are recognized as deictic words. When these words are used in any narrative, they refer to a previously stated, or, less frequently, a yet-to-be stated, person, time, or location. While looking through the deictic words in discourse we see that they are the WHO, the WHERE, and the WHEN words or phrases. Galbraith states that the simplest deictic sentence is the most

difficult one to interpret: "I am here now". Interpreting the meaning of this sentence requires knowing who speaks as "I," what "here." As we see, without context, this sentence has lexical meaning but no semantic content.

Determination of Context

Context refers to information about place and time, circumstances, social roles, demographic variables, and so on. The term "deictic window" is used by deictic researchers rather than the less specific word "context," but it is referred to the same element of story with this more specific term: "spatial, temporal and psychological coordinates establishing a deictic perspective in the narrated world" (Zubin and Hewitt 133).

As Hewitt mentioned within narratives the situation that gives rise to any statement within that narrative is its context, its basis for interpretation and understanding by the reader. The simple sentence "I am here now" spoken by a girl to her parents who have been looking for her has a more different meaning than does the same sentence spoken by a co-worker entering a meeting ten minutes late. Van Dijk states that context opens the properties of the text. What is said and how it is said depends on which character in the narrative is speaking to whom, when, where, and for what purpose (van Dijk 108). We cannot tell stories without a context, so the context supports them. In order to tell stories we must refer to a speaker, a place or a time, that which

deictically identifies the narrator, locates the narrator or character in the story, ascertains the time span of the narrative moment. That's why, context is considered to be a constituent element of deixis.

Lots of deictic words and phrases refer to a word or phrase within a narrative's context which were previously introduced, or, less frequently, to a phrase to be introduced; these are anaphora and cataphora. An example of anaphora is taken from "There is a lucky number" by Margery Allingham:

A sound in the kitchen below worried him. Was Edyth coming up to have her bath before he had prepared it for her? No it was all right, she was going out of the back door. From the window he saw her disappearing round the side of the house into the small square garden. He didn't like her to be alone there. She was a shy person, but now new people had moved into the house next door, and there was a danger of some silly woman making friends with her. He didn't want that just now.

The anaphoric reference word, in bold-face, is the demonstrative that but this word does not clearly refer to just one element in the phrase that precedes it. That may refer to the content of the story, the act of the narrator, his anxiety.

As we know cataphora refers to a word or phrase later in the narrative, it clarifies its referent, a phrase in which the referent appears before its noun phrase. Examples below express the general in-

tent of cataphoric phrases: "What I decided to do is this," or "This is what I have decided," in which the pronoun *this* precedes the explanation or definition that follows.

Anaphora and cataphora within a narrative are known as discourse deixis, the use of antecedents and precedents in a text. Such a question arises why anaphor and cataphora are described here because they are considered a fundamental part of linguistic analysis of narrative, but they will not be used in the reader's evaluative questions because these terms do not contribute to the reader's determination of context, narrator's point of view, narrator's marginizing strategies, or silenced characters.

Besides, social deixis is considered to fulfil another deictic function in narrative. So the words and phrases are used to determine the social status of a narrator and recipient, as well as the form of address (familiar, polite, honorific) within a narrative. The following is an example from Margery Allingham story:

/Mirs Edyth never spoke to Ronald. When she passed Ronald would say with trembling voice: , "Good morning, ma'am," and she would wave her hands instead of answering (emphasis added)./

Socially deictic expressions in this selection are in boldface. In this passage, the narrator, Ronald addresses to Mirs Edyth by the polite form "Ma'am." With this greeting Ronald shows deference and evidence of appropriate Southern social

manners by saying good morning with trembling voice and speaking the expected greeting phrase, Good morning, followed by the equally deferential and required honorific, ma'am. This passage illustrates the full spectrum of social deixis: the familiar ; the polite (Ma'am Edyth); and the honorific ma'am, although in the South, the use of "sir" and "ma'am" is so pervasive in all levels of social conversation that it may be more correctly considered a polite form of address.

The social forms of address in a narrative are clear indicators and the character of these indicators has dominance in a story situation, their title confers authority over other characters in a story, and it becomes easy for a reader to determine which character is privileged and which character is marginized or silenced.

Determination of Deictic Shift Theory

Deictic Shift Theory is a set of premises about readers and stories that grew out of research on the function of deixis in fictional narratives. Mary Galbraith considers the Austrian psychologist Karl Bühler to be the first researcher to note the operation of deixis in narrative text in his work, *The Theory of Language*. Here deixis is said to be constituted differently for fictional narrative.

Besides, Segal describes Deictic Shift Theory similarly as the state experienced by readers and writers in which they imagine themselves participating in a world that is not literally present, experiencing the events and situations from a

position inside the story (Segal14). Segal further explains that much of the meaning of the story may be understood only from a cognitive position inside the story (Segal14).

Segal offers seven propositions and his first proposition is form and content (16). It is the study of linguistic features such as sentence and paragraph structures, verb tense, pronoun use, lexical choices, descriptive style of voice quality, and grammar style (conversational, academic, colloquial, idiomatic). Let's pay attention to form. Form looks at how text appears on the page and looks at such paralinguistic devices as punctuation style, blocking and shaping of text, paragraphing and other breaks in the text, and use of multiple fonts. A narrator opens a story with short phrases, and uses verb-less sentences throughout the text. In this way he tells the reader as much about point of view, about story context, and tone of the story as the words tell.

Segal groups form and content together (16), but we consider them to be actually separate features of the text for the reader and they are formulated as separate questions. Form is the two-dimensional appearance of the text itself, the visual first impression. But content requires reading the story, it requires shifting from the lived world into the story world, and experiencing the story world from the point of view of the narrator or another character. According to

Galbraith there is no content, no meaning, to a creative narrative until the reader discovers

that meaning in the language of the story (Galbraith 46).

Content, and the next proposition, context, require the reader's ability to model the story world from her knowledge of the lived world. It is called as "mental modeling". Some readers have the difficulty to understand the content and context. They consider the content and the context to be the murky areas in narrative. In this case some questions arise from an unclear understanding of a story, such as: What does this story mean to me? How can I know the narrator's point of view? Why do I need to know which character is silenced? The answers may be found in the language of the story through the process of asking specific questions of the text, questions developed to reveal answers to the four summary questions proposed in this study. The meaning of the entirety of a narrative is greater than the linguistic meaning of the text's contents. Analysis of context looks at the descriptive background and situational settings of the narrative's presentation - when, where, what, and who - and at the rhetorical and lexical choices the narrator uses to explore and exploit the story.

Segal and Galbraith consider that similar to content questions, the reader's questioning analysis of context presumes that the reader's general knowledge of

her world, along with her understanding of social and life experiences, add to the meaning of the narrative (Segal 16; Galbraith 46; Blackledge9).

According to Wood and Kroger context is a problematic concept in linguistic research and discourse analysis in that it is often difficult to define what is and what is not to be included as context in studies of specific texts (Wood and Kroger 135).

According to Galbraith context in creative narratives is "the direct representation of the raw material of fictional reality...the phenomenal experience of a subject" (Galbraith 53). We fully agree with his idea on this field. Galbraith further defines context in deictic studies as the specific story world assembled in the act of reading the words of the text (Galbraith 53).

Segal describes context as the "story world," as those "events of a story primarily take place within a single spacetime continuum" identified as the story world. The story world contains people, places, objects and events that exist in spatial, temporal and causal relationship with one another" (Segal 70). Segal further asserts that the fully populated "spacetime continuum" constrains and limits the characters and situations in the story in a way that gives the reader the feeling of coherence (Segal 71).

While explaining the difference between context and content we can see

that context provides the background and cultural and social milieu in which a

particular story occurs. But content tells of particular characters, events, and times portrayed against the backdrop of context. Content is explicitly described in the narrative. But context is often implicitly assumed in the narrative.

Segal states that "Mental Model" is used in Deictic Shift Theory. It is a term which was borrowed from cognitive psychology and psycholinguistic research. It describes the lived experience of every human being. In the premises of Deictic Shift Theory, the reader of a narrative uses her life mental model to construct a model of the story's world as it is encountered in reading (Segal 17). Segal states that the reader's mental model assumes that the events and objects in the story world will resemble those found in the lived world unless informed otherwise by the story contents or the genre, science fiction or fantasy narratives (71). And because the reader's mental model assumes a default of resemblance with lived experience, the narrator need not explicitly state everything about a character or event; many details are assumed by the reader and made a part of the reader's interpretation of the story. Consider the example. It is an example from *How is your mother?* by Simon Brett which illustrates a gap filled in by the reader:

/It was Monday morning, and Patridge was making his breakfast. He turned on his cooker and prepared to boil an egg. He

looked out of the window with satisfaction. In the interval between the weekend and Monday he had dug the garden and planted all the roses/.

The narrator explicitly states that the day was Monday, then describes the scene occurring “between weekend and Monday ” The narrator does not explain the process that Patridge did during the weekend.. The narrator assumes the reader knows that Monday means for Patridge beginning a new working day and skips over the unnecessary details of where, when, why and how Patridge moved from weekend to Monday morning between sentences.

The process of the modeling the story world allows the reader to locate characters in a text both spatially and temporally: who speaks, when and where. Modeling also establishes a relationship with the story world and the characters, allowing the reader to participate mentally in the relationships created among the characters in the narrative (Segal 17).

Segal adds another aspect to the topic of mental models and constructs a mental model of the world of the story before and during writing, reader does.

The author “makes a deictic shift into the mind of the fictional narrator” and views the story world from the narrator’s perspective. According to Segal, the narrative cannot be said to represent the actual author’s thoughts, feelings, or beliefs (70). Therefore, this study will focus only

on the narrator’s experiences, descriptions, assumptions, fears, etc., as revealed in the text.

Determination of Discourse Theory of Silencing

The discourse theory of Silencing has arisen out of Critical Discourse Analysis. This theory shares all the theoretical and methodological perspectives of the Critical Discourse Analysis.

Silencing is a “performative category” of discourse. It is an act, which gives preference to some speakers (or narrators) and represses other speakers (narrators) (Thiesmeyer 3)..

According to Blackledge CDA is neither a single theory nor a uniform and consistent methodology; its plurality and “eclecticism” and “dynamism” are evidence that CDA arose from a concern with the social rather than the “purely linguistic” (Blackledge 2). CDA is a way of thinking about discourse, theory, as well as a way of recording data in discourse, methodology (Wood and Kroger 3), and it is concerned with the identification of social behaviors as expressed in language (Wood and Kroger 28). CDA refers to a wide range of perspectives that have their root in linguistics, all of which share a concern for critical examination of social and cultural practices (Wood and Kroger 21). CDA is more than just the “specific analyses of language structures and usages,” it is the evaluation of relationships among language, social norms and ideologies (Thiesmeyer 1).

Looking through the central features of CDA we see that the first feature is the analysis of relationships, predominantly the relationship of text to its "social, discursive and historical context." Blommaert and Bulcaen note that the CDA researcher searches for the "structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language" (Blommaert and Bulcaen 448). But Blackledge states that CDA researcher searches for the "attitudes and beliefs ... of power and social inequality" (Blackledge 37).

The second feature is that CDA researchers are sure that the meaning of a text is not contained within the text itself. Blackledge asserts that "readers or hearers make sense of the text by linking it to their previous knowledge and expectations," an essentially unlimited variable that is composed of not only the reader's knowledge, but constrained by the reader's interests and presumptions (Blackledge 9). The fact that readers link texts to their own experiences and that their interests and assumptions contribute to the understanding of a text (Blackledge 9) is identical to the mental model presumption in Deictic Shift Theory research (Segal 17);

Blackledge assumes that CDA takes as its central purpose that of revealing structures of power in language; it is in language that discriminatory practices are acted out, it is in language that the "unequal relations of power" are replicat-

ed, and it is in language that inequalities and the rhetoric of discrimination is contested and corrected (Blackledge 5). Wood and Kroger and Blommaert and Bulcaen agree with Blackledge. Wood and Kroger state that in CDA "emphasis is on the understanding of discourse in relation to social problems; to social structural variables such as race, gender, and class; and above all to power" (Wood and Kroger 21).

Social differences are constructed in language, in the structuring of language use in discourse (Blackledge 33). This means that language, and language ideologies, are "anything but neutral, especially in societies where some language and identity options are privileged above others" (Blackledge 36). Blackledge presents another research assumption: if racism (and this hypothesis could extend to any type of social problem or social discrimination under study) is reproduced in discourse, then it is reproduced across all categories of communication - social practices, discursive practices, and in texts (Blackledge 47).

The search for any type of discrimination in discourse means that the researcher is aware of discriminatory acts perpetrated through language and has adopted a stance - whether political, social, educational, personal - toward the discriminatory acts.

Blackledge declares that the political standpoint of the analyst will never be entirely absent (3), that it is not possible to

conduct research free from value judgments, that “there is no value-free CDA, and that ultimately, there is no value-free science” (17). He asserts that CDA “situates its analysis both in its social, cultural and historical context and in the perspective and position of the researcher(s), in particular, explicitly defining and defending its own sociopolitical position” (Blackledge 59).

Blackledge states that CDA examines texts through three process lenses: 1. “intertextuality” 2. “interdiscursivity,” 3. “recontextualisation” (10). Blackledge notes that intertextuality is considered to be a cornerstone of CDA research. He explains that “every text is embedded in a context and is synchronically and diachronically related to many other texts.” Blackledge states while it is occasionally easy to see the relationship of texts, it is more often difficult to identify embedded texts (10). Intertextuality is certainly a feature of creative short narratives – it is exemplified in the familiar expression, “There are no new stories, only new ways of telling them.” According to Blackledge interdiscursivity is the property of discourse. It connects the type of text to the expected context and quality of discourse. They are generally found in a specific social situation. Blackledge’s definition states that, “interdiscursive analysis links the particular conventionalized practices which are available to text producers in particular circumstances” (11). Interdiscursivity is also a feature of narra-

tives. It is a part of the reader’s mental model identifying a correct type of discourse for a context. Blackledge gives an example that in a story’s courtroom scene the reader expects to hear legal language, the reading of legal documents, and an adversarial cross-examination; this is the expected “conventionalized practice” extant in court settings. Legal phrasings and witness cross-examinations do not often happen in the supermarket, and the reader would instantly recognize it as an activity out of its usual discursive context.

Recontextualization of discourse is both the repetition of a discourse or text in a new context and the transformation of that discourse. The repetition of a text in a different context involves a transformation, because discourse will attract new meanings in new settings. Blackledge assumes that recontextualization is the mainstay of newspaper reporting, talk shows, magazine articles, any public debate, gossip, rumor, and the organizational grapevine, where public or private events are re-presented, accurately or otherwise (Blackledge 12). We agree with his thought and it seems logical that all narratives are recontextualizations of previous narratives.

We can see the reason that the mental model concept works so well in understanding how readers connect to stories. So such themes like “good overcomes evil”, “when one door closes, another one opens” circulate in social conversation as platitudes and they are

recontextualized in a variety of new story settings.

According to Blackledge Recontextualization is a mainstay of Critical Discourse Analysis. It serves as the basis for many close and detailed discursive analyses of texts. Recontextualization is considered to be a fundamental presumption for all creative short narratives. It does not need to be developed into a question for readers.

Studying the discourse theory of Silencing, we see that according to Thiesmeyer, in the discourse theory of Silencing all discourse is an act within the social sphere (Thiesmeyer 3). Silencing is a “contradictory act” in that it operates through discourse, through “publicly learned and publicly used language with social frameworks and functions” (Thiesmeyer 1). As an act, silencing is the expression of unequal power relations among participants that has personal, social and global consequences; it is a discursive relationship in which the social value of the exchange is unequal (Thiesmeyer14). Silencing incorporates these discursive acts and the social frameworks, the contexts, that sanction silencing. Silencing in this study and as used in discourse analysis is not the result of illness, injury, or impairment; it is an active and socially constructed practice (Thiesmeyer 4), one that is, or can seem to be, the result of personal choice. But silencing “clearly involves choices made by

other people as well as by the potential speaker” (Thiesmeyer 2).

Silencing of characters is imposed in narrative in four ways: it may be externally- imposed, or it may be internally-imposed, it may be unrealized silencing, or it may be compliant silencing. Whatever the form, silencing is the result of social and political judgments about who may speak and who may not (Thiesmeyer 2). We consider these forms of character silencing to be called Forced, Chosen, Unrealized, and Compliant. Forced and Chosen silencing indicate choices. These choices are made by individuals or groups to silence ideas and information selectively rather than allow free, open discourse among participants.

Unrealized silencing indicates either no choice or an unconscious acceptance of silencing. Clair states that in populations that have been discriminated against over long periods of time, the acceptance of silencing has become institutionalized and customary among the discriminated population (Clair 35). For example, customs which assign the legal status of property to women and children, a status that stripped their ability to claim rights as human beings or to speak for themselves (Clair 39), have silenced women and children for centuries. This custom, like so many others, has been so long a social reality . Acceptance of this status was unconscious and unrealized, because it was the condition of all women and children.

According to Thiesmeyer, compliant silencing is a complex and coercive choice which participates in social discourse not through an individual's own words or actions but according to choices made by others as to what is acceptable to speak and do. It is an act of discourse that disguises the silencing contained within it (Thiesmeyer 2). Thiesmeyer states: Compliance can be maintained by awareness of possible unpleasant alternatives. It occurs rather than by the coercive use of unpleasant alternative themselves. The power of discourse lies in the discursive system's ability to preclude challenges.

Discursive assimilation is silencing by restricting an individual or group to a different acceptable kind of discourse expression than the expression the individual or groups might have independently produced (Thiesmeyer 8). Discursive displacement, similar to discursive assimilation, is the silencing of forbidden speech and narrative by replacement with acceptable speech and texts that express dominant social ideas and customs, sacrificing or discarding the unacceptable discourse (Thiesmeyer 9).

Discursive reproduction of accepted ideologies, unifying phrases, and conventional notions through mass media and educational institutions is silencing not only of personal voices but of the ideas and information these voices may have offered.

The goal of using acceptable discourse to silence unacceptable discourse is to

eliminate the potential for any audience in the social sphere to gain access to unacceptable information. A society unable to hear about or be aware of the existence of ideas that differ too much from those normally permitted by the dominant ideology cannot use those ideas or information to challenge the dominant discourse (Thiesmeyer 9).

Discursive reproduction is repetition, the re-producing, of acceptable discourse. Consider the examples:

- "We are a Democracy,"
It's the American Way,"

"We are all equal in the eyes of the law," or

"These colors don't run"

These are nationalistic slogans which are particularly obvious examples of discursive reproduction of a dominant ideology. This ideology has no factual basis in practice.

An individual's* group's silencing by dominant powers may come about by

discursive deprivation, displacement, or assimilation; any one of these forceful processes has the ability to produce silencing; and the ideas of an individual or a group may be silenced by the consistent reproduction of a dominant ideology. Identifying the locus of silencing and the means that produced it are important ideas in this study and will be used in developing the evaluative questions for readers.

In summary, the following premises of silencing have been selected from the

discussion above. First, silencing works in and through discourse, and is an act of

discourse (Thiesmeyer 14). Second, the silencing of characters operates in four ways: Forced, Chosen, Unrealized, and Compliant (Thiesmeyer 2-7). And, third, the silencing of discourse works through four processes: discursive deprivation, discursive assimilation, discursive displacement, and discursive reproduction (Thiesmeyer 8).

Conclusion

Having studied the Deictic Shift Theory and the Discourse Theory of Silencing, we may come to the conclusion that Deictic Shift Theory is a set of premises about readers and stories that grew out of research on the function of deixis in fictional narratives. Deictic Shift Theory is described similarly as the state experienced by readers and writers in which they imagine themselves participating in a world that is not literally present, experiencing the events and situations from a position inside the story. We have found out that

"Mental Model" is used in Deictic Shift Theory. It is a term which was borrowed from cognitive psychology and psycholinguistic research. It describes the lived experience of every human being. In the premises of Deictic Shift Theory, the reader of a narrative uses her life mental model to construct a model of the story's world as it is encountered in reading.

Analyzing the discourse theory of silencing we come to a conclusion that silencing is a "contradictory act" in that it operates through discourse, through publicly learned and publicly used language with social frameworks and functions.

As an act, silencing is the expression of unequal power relations among participants that has personal, social and global consequences; it is a discursive relationship in which the social value of the exchange is unequal (Thiesmeyer14).

Identifying the locus of silencing and the means that produced it are important ideas in this study and will be used in developing the evaluative questions for readers.

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Milton: Fandom Anymore

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Abstract

The writer who engages in acts of online role-play or make-believe is often thought to promote him or herself as an individual agent. However, when members of Pluralism's role-play communities engage in play, they create scenes together that prompt surrender of authorial agency. In doing so, they engage in transindividual work, which allows them to work across, among, and between other entities until the boundaries of the self become porous rather than fixed.

Keywords: Milton Fan community; pluralism, theology

Introduction

While the founder of the microblogging network Pluralism, David Karp, created his network in order to allow viewers to share concise bits of texts, film, and images, some users on this network have chosen to compose posts with significant word counts (Howard 2012). Many of these posts are by fans coauthoring narrative threads—threads that act as a hybrid of fan fiction and online gam-

ing—as they transmit responses back and forth. This practice is most commonly known as role-play (also abbreviated rp). While Pluralism role-play has previously been described as a hybrid of fan fiction and online gaming (see McClellan 2013), the unique quality in role-play is the synergy created when strangers surrender authorial agency in favor of the improvisational process of play. This surrender comes, in part, from the divisions of self-

hood performed online—divisions labeled as mun, muse, and anon.

Pluralism role-play is unique because the players involved differentiate between the mun and muse. A mun, short for the mundane, refers to the author who creates and maintains the Pluralism account. Like a Twitter or LiveJournal user, the mun will select the basic blog design, the information on a short biography, and the handle that will be used to attract other role players on this same interface. The muse is the character(s) portrayed in role-play. Muses are often characters from the mun's favorite stories from film, television, literature, games, or graphic novels. If the mun is a fan of *Grey's Anatomy* (2005–), for example, he or she will select Meredith Grey as muse and then select an icon, or face claim, of Ellen Pompeo, who plays Grey.

If another role player wishes to engage someone's muse, he or she will submit a starter, which launches a dialogue between the characters. This dialogue will be housed primarily on Pluralism's ongoing dashboard of posts, or its feed. Unlike other role-playing scenarios where the characters and game moderators place most of their energy into world building and clear adherence to canonical interpretations of characters, independent role players on Pluralism create new scenes of interaction between characters, ones that often transcend the canon or established narrative of a given universe. For example, some place characters from different

universes into the same dialogue, creating an intertextual moment between the Meredith of *Grey's Anatomy* and one of the angels from the television show *Supernatural* (2005–).

Additionally, role players on Pluralism occasionally perform the role of anons, which gives them a third option to consider when they engage in dialogue. When one player wishes to interact with another player without revealing her username, the role player will submit feedback via the inbox in order to share admiration for another person's writing or performance of character. By submitting information anonymously, one player may also ask another player questions without fear of rejection. The anon option acts as an invitation to other players, players who might be too shy to approach a new player outright but who wish to offer narrative challenges or ideas. In allowing anons to communicate with her, the mun shows how willing she is to surrender to the unpredictability of encounters with other players.

Current theory and past scholarship

Role players on Pluralism, rather than capitalize on individual potential, embrace moments of humility in their encounters with others, allowing them to do what Brian Massumi (2014) and other scholars have referred to as transindividual work. Transindividualism may be defined as a phenomenon during which players work beyond, across, within, and among

boundaries of self until such boundaries become porous, although, as in the case of Pluralism, they are not completely erased. As stated above, role players on Pluralism typically refer to themselves (the authors) self-consciously and ironically as the mundane, or mun. When answering questions or prompts as the mun, the readers get a glimpse into the daily lives of the writers who author scenes. Conversely, when executing a fictional exchange among characters, the muses are in charge.

A somewhat common description of the mun and muse interaction is one in which the mun acts in opposition to the fictional muse she attempts to control. This phenomenon echoes Latour (2005), who describes the limits of human agency in terms of puppets and the master who holds the strings. He extends the analogy to say that "puppeteers will rarely behave as having total control over their puppets. They will say queer things like 'their marionettes suggest them to do things they will have never thought possible by themselves'" (59–60). Like the puppeteer, the blogger may originally pull the metaphorical strings on her muse, only to find the muse rebel against her original plan. Once a role-play scene begins, the muse's spirit prevails.

This opposition from the muse acts as a humbling device rather than as an obstacle. Even if users deploy such a bifurcation ironically more than seriously, the desire to involve oneself in a loss of agen-

cy is worth examination because this phenomenon suggests that writers are moving beyond selfhood and toward something else. This is important because most descriptions of online character work, whether in gaming or in improvisational writing, have often stressed the value of the individual self as empowered. Michelle Nephew (2006) historicizes role-play in her research on identity and desire, stressing its value in psychology where it helps people "achieve greater self-awareness" (122). According to Nephew, role-play provides players with the chance to create "a dream-world of their own creating that affirms their sense of self-worth and power" (127).

Past role-play scenarios in studies of tabletop or live-action role-play also feature a quest for self-empowerment, both in the way they feature leaders and the way certain traits are valued. As Mona (2007) explains, role-play activity in games like *Dungeons and Dragons* features a dungeon master who emcees the game as it unfolds (29–30). Likewise, in another game, *Vampire: The Masquerade*, the storyteller is in control of what happens (Hindmarch 2007, 49). Today's online games build on these experiences, as MacCallum-Stewart (2014) explains. She stresses that online players "have a proactive attitude towards games, which means that they regard them as texts which they have the power to change" (36). Furthermore, she argues that the tabletop gaming traits of "strength, stamina,

charisma, intelligence, dexterity, wisdom and constitution" are valued in online scenarios just as they are in *Dungeons and Dragons* (23). Here again, individual power matters a great deal, even when a player cooperates with a community of others. We return again and again to the idea of "empowering the player-as-creator" (MacCallum-Stewart 2014, 53). Certainly role players, particularly dungeon masters, in such tabletop gaming scenarios are often more concerned with world building than with character development, yet the power required to build a world necessitates a division between the leader and her players.

As stated earlier, Pluralism role-play acts as a hybrid of gaming and fan fiction. Therefore, we might find less emphasis on power or self-worth in studies of online character work where narrative is the objective. However, this is not the case. For example, Osborne (2012) studies narrative role-play happening on LiveJournal, where players "improvise written responses in the course of play" and also "partake of the transgressive elements of fan fiction" (§2.4). Osborne returns to ideas of the author as commander and storyteller, just like in the tabletop gaming examples mentioned above. Although she emphasizes the development of empathy that allows players to connect to others, she says that such creative work by bloggers is designed ultimately to help players "discover new parts of themselves" (§5.3). She goes on to explain that

partnership, while important, helps individuals overcome "fear and irrational worries" and teaches players how to relate to the world around them (§5.12). Again, this reinforces the benefits gained by the individual, even when that self enters a community of like-minded players. Likewise, in Louisa Ellen Stein's work (2006), the setup on LiveJournal reinforces this notion of authorial control because comments and threads among characters are hosted on one character's page and subject to deletion at any given time. Characters like the Draco Malfoy of her case study also worry about designing their personal diaries so that the look and feel of the page reflect a character in his own right; for example, he says, "I do hope they have my colours in stock" on LiveJournal so that the Slytherin green and silver are featured prominently when others visit the page (246).

Past scholarship in literacy and fan studies has also articulated play as a manifestation of individual agency or self-empowerment. These scholars have taken productive and thorough note of online communities centered on fan fiction writing, role-playing, and the development of avatars (Black 2008; Gee 2007; Johnson 2012; Kaplan 2006; Warren 2013; Williams 2009). Booth's (2008) research is important for documenting early examples of MySpace user profiles that are based on characters from television programming. His article highlights the power of these fans to identify with television characters

and "become proprietors of their own textual spaces" (520) as they engage in "identity play" (533). Although Booth (2008) carefully attends to the fluidity of such practices of character impersonation and how such role-play merges "the real and the simulated" (534), the idea of becoming a proprietor of a space suggests a concrete territorialization of online space, of gleefully planting one's flag in a corner of the Web.

Role-play on Pluralism does not allow its users to plant flags in selected territories as much as it invites them to transcend any singular moment of Web site creation or character impersonation. Because multiple overlaps of characters and partners occur simultaneously, humility and a lack of agency become essential to the player who moves beyond selfhood toward something greater. In *What Animals Teach Us about Politics*, Massumi (2014) explains how transindividualism works by describing animals who engage in acts of playful combat, acts that reveal "active potential not only in the animal who executes [them], but also in the other" (35). Massumi explains further, "When I make the kind of gesture that places me in the register of play, you are immediately taken there as well. My gesture transports you with me into a different arena of activity than the one we were just in. You are inducted into play with me. In a single gesture, two individuals are swept up together and move in tandem to a register of existence" (5). When moving in

tandem, two beings no longer operate as master storytellers in their own right but as part of a transindividual flow, or channel, that requires complete surrender of the ego in addition to community participation.

Methodology

In the spirit of Brittany Kelley's (2016) recent work on cultivating goodwill through online research, I hope to stress my presence as a participant in the Pluralism community and not simply a lurker mining data for publications. My experience with role-play there began in 2013 when I wrote scenes with my first writing partner, who was patient enough to help me understand the difference in the *mun* and *muse* terms I saw circulating online. From 2013 to 2014, I was an active member of the *Hannibal* fandom and a participant in Pluralism's role-play communities. Between the years of 2014 and 2016, I role-played more sporadically and continued to archive posts about role-play that interested me. My archive was built around a series of screenshots, which revealed the willingness of players to move beyond ego and work toward transindividual experiences. Over the past 3 years, I have collected approximately 150 to 200 screenshots of moments in which players describe the differences between their *mun* and *muse*, articulate what role-play means to them, and/or explain the benefits and drawbacks of anon encounters.

Like other members of this community, my blog was public, and the role-play scenes I coauthored with my partner were often archived or reblogged to an even wider audience than our initial followers. Although the materials cited here were publicly shared, I make every effort to secure permission from specific muses when I quote directly from their handle or a role-play scene (I also applied for and received Institutional Review Board exemption for this research through my university). In some cases, Pluralism users will abandon a handle and seek an alternate muse quite frequently, which makes it difficult to maintain contact with the role-playing community, as it is constantly in flux. Some of the work that others and I posted occasionally became fan fiction works that we would later submit to places like Archive of Our Own. Other scenes existed purely for the joy of creating something, even if it was temporary, with someone who shared similar passions for certain stories and worlds. While most work was archived according to a specific set of hashtags, other examples of role-play acted as fleeting interchanges between strangers who might never complete the scene at hand.

In order to analyze the screenshots of role-play activity that follow, I engage in what Clifford Geertz has referred to in his ethnographic work as "thick description." Geertz explains that thickness of data results from considerable investment in a community during which the researcher

wallows in a "multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and explicit" (1973, 10). In narrowing my data set, I was particularly drawn to moments of role-play that others have referred to as "bleed" (Montola 2010), where "bleeding in" refers to the author's real life influencing the character and "bleeding out" describes the way a character influences the player. Still, I found that such terms alone did not fully account for what was happening on Pluralism, since the act of bleeding itself was compounded by bleeding both in and out of the character while also simultaneously bleeding into one's partner. This led to me to consider how role players embrace humility and willingly forsake individual goals to enter into play.

Because of my own involvement in role-playing, my perception is, no doubt, influenced by the positive experiences I had in my own corner of the Web. A search of the hashtags *role-play*, *rp*, and *mun* or *muse* reveal thousands of posts that exist across scores of fandoms on Pluralism. While I frequently engaged in such searches and made preliminary notes on the basis of how many posts contained references to the mun/muse relationship and how role players engaged with their anon readers, I was still frequently drawn to examples that had some connection to the narratives I enjoyed, and in this sense the examples presented

here are not meant to represent all of Pluralism or even all of the role players active there. Additionally, not all role-playing communities facilitate a positive experience. In some cases, role players have been bullied and/or threatened by anons. Some role players even turn off the anonymous post function to secure their own composing space and avoid such problems. On a less dramatic level, many role players struggle with feelings of isolation when other players refuse to accept their invitations to play. Likewise, some role-play groups on Pluralism, those established by a moderator, are more like the groups of tabletop gaming participants where one person exercises considerable control over a group of players and establishes what could be considered arbitrary rules of engagement. The examples that follow, then, focus on independent role players whose experiences are largely positive. In doing so, I stress the ways in which authors learn to trust others and to surrender agency.

Features and forms of digital role-play

In order to begin a study of Pluralism role-play, it helps to look first at common examples of character identification online, examples that often reinforce the fan as a single role player or agent. For instance, character identification activities on Facebook or other networks where quizzes are found online tell us which character from a given story we identify with most. These moments are designed by fans as well as by producers. Just re-

cently, I took a quiz on Facebook that informed me that I did not just identify with Haymitch Abernathy from *The Hunger Games* but that I *was* Haymitch. In this case I am told that I "am principled and independent," a loner," and "have my own way of doing things." This result pleases me, so I share it online with my followers (see Williams 2009). Still, as I share this quiz result, I remain Haymitch without a Katniss Everdeen, and this lack of a mentor-mentee bond, according to Massumi's (2014) terminology, would render my Haymitch somewhat impotent.

Other applications also allow users to transform their photos to appear more like a character in the fictional world. Producers behind *The Walking Dead* games and applications also invented a way that fans could "dead themselves." See the result below (figure 1):

By embedding myself in the narrative, I transform my body in a way that is characteristic of zombies in the television show. Here we see the posthuman body (as virtual zombie online) acting as a living text meant to advertise and promote a certain story. However, Massumi (2014) explains that to engage in authentic play, one must offer a "ludic gesture" to another, and this gesture remains "impotent unless it captures the other's attention" and envelops them in the scene (35). In the image above, I call attention to myself as icon, allowing others to view me as a specific zombie subject, crystallized in time and space. An approach that moves

beyond selfhood demands something more from us; it is always, as Morton (2013) explains in his study of ecology and posthumanism, "decisively decentering us from a place of pampered privilege in the scheme of things" (47) rather than featuring our mastery of the world around us. Here, for example, I can insert my own head shot into a zombie template, and I may find the effect or result entertaining, but such an effect does not represent the spirit of true play among multiple partners. To engage fully in play, we must accept that we are no longer in control of the outcome. Again, this is different from role players in Stein's (2006) work, where the Draco Malfoy role player, for example, refers to his LiveJournal as "this dratted thing," something to be supervised and shaped by the writer. No one "dratted thing" encapsulates play in the Pluralism examples to follow; all are consistently evolving texts that move beyond and across any one individual's efforts.

As Petersen (2014) has noted, Pluralism's layout is more horizontal than vertical since Pluralism as a platform has "a lack of territorial boundaries" across different posts and conversations (101) unlike other sites such as LiveJournal, which feature accumulation of notes and comments on an individual site. Less attention is paid to a role player's personal page and more attention is paid to the scene of play. Here, for example, a role player explains on the forum

roleplayingconfessionsfromrpers (2016) that the elaborate design of a template is a distraction:

I have a default theme on my blog on purpose and I'm not about to change it. The default theme is so much easier to navigate and read through than most of your fancy themes. If I can see your blog have [sic] tiny font, and a small box for text, And only fancy graphics and music and intelligible formatting, I start to question whether you're in it for the writing or for praise for your first attempt at web design.

Emphasis on personal Web design is distracting for transindividual play rather than helpful. While some muns emphasize design in their presentation of muses, most role-play scenarios feature reblogging alphabetic text from one player to the next without added bells and whistles.

Consider, as an example, part of a role-play exchange between Pluralism users—one role created from Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett's book *Good Omens* (1990) and the other from the television show *Supernatural*. This call-and-response form of writing unfolds as partners build threads that may go on for hours or days at a time. I have placed a part of their script below:

User bibliophileangel's (2013) archive features a dialogue with role player raziangelofsecrets. Raziangelofsecrets writes:

Linked in arms with Aziraphale, Raz fought to not blush at the contact. What was up with her? Was she falling for this handsome stranger and his beautiful sonorous voice? As he talked about his books, she started to get a silly little grin, enjoying hearing him speak so passionately. "It sounds absolutely wonderful." She commented when he stopped talking. For not much, it was more than she imagined. As he opened the door, she could smell old books on the air and it was only because she was already excited about being around Aziraphale that she didn't get a sudden rush. When he called her darling, she turned an interesting scarlet color and tried to hide it by ducking her head. "Um, just some tea if you don't mind."

The response from user bibliophileangel:

Aziraphale smiled as he took in her expression. "So...I take it you like books as much as I do. You don't often see that much enthusiasm in a fellow angel." He quirked an eyebrow at her as he disappeared into the back room to put water in his self boiling kettle, a gift from his demon friend Crowley. He also prepared his favorite tea set, also a gift from Crowley. He poked his head around the corner, smiling as he took her in. "Feel free to look around at anything that catches your interest."

In such role-play scenes, it is common for one player to, as seen above, "open the door" to a conversation that reveals com-

mon interests. As the scene progresses, the players reply specifically to developments conjured by the previous entry, so above we note that Aziraphale "smiled as he took in her expression" and then, in a later comment, encourages the other player to "look around at anything that catches [the player's] interest." Such invitational lines suggest a metacommunicative stance: not only is Aziraphale, the fictional character, inviting Raziel into the world of the narrative, but the two writers are inviting each other into a new platform of correspondence, where they may adapt to the other's needs. What is most significant (as the rest of this project will demonstrate) is how, by the end of the thread, the two writers have become something that is more than just a partnership. Instead they act transindividually, as some form of Aziraphale-Raziel. The two muns are not only bleeding, to use Montola (2010)'s term, into their muses, but they are also simultaneously bleeding into each other. They are being swept up, as Massumi (2014) suggests, into a tandem of existence.

Massumi (2014) also speaks to this level of engagement by explaining that what he proposes is ultimately "a pluralist activist philosophy" that is the product of an "ecological playing out" (90). In other words, the field of play allows for multiple solutions and multiple meanings that may continually be combined or singled out. At first, accepting a role-play invita-

tion means accepting a specific version of an established (or sometimes original) fictional character, represented by the player's handle. This is important since role players often choose the same character to portray. For example, after the airing of NBC's *Hannibal* (2013–15) many Hannibal Lecter role-play blogs sprung up on Pluralism as a homage to Mads Mikkelsen's portrayal of the character. The handle *afteryourdeathormine* has a different online reputation than the handle *lectercollapsingchurches*, which bases its text on the backstory of the character's obsession with the destruction of faith and on the organizing symbol of structural debris. The user explains: "I see this idea of the church collapsing as feeding into the image of a fallen angel. This blog features a journey of transformation rather than a stagnant portrayal of Lecter" (*lectercollapsingchurches* 2013). This is different from *afteryourdeathormine*, whose introductory material about the same character features medical disclaimers and attention to the character's position as a psychiatrist. She says, "I am not a medical professional. I am not certified to offer medical, psychiatric, or personal advice in any way. This is a roleplay blog—based off a manipulative, abusive, charming character, whom I do not own or in any way represent" (*afteryourdeathormine* 2013). Her page even offers links to various crisis hotlines for those with mental illness.

This malleability and diversity in character development counters what some scholars say is essential to the role-play experience: fidelity to the original narrative and the characters inside it. As McClellan (2013) argues, "To build a convincing world, characters must speak like their source characters, they must interact with other characters from the show in textually appropriate ways, and they must respond to new situations in ways that are consistent with their televisual counterparts" (143). If we take McClellan's point and apply it to the world of Pluralism, then we must imagine that multiple versions of a canonical character would potentially be frowned upon or dismissed rather than embraced. If fidelity to the original narrative suggests that a singularity is at work and that all players must conform to the verisimilitude of the fictional world at hand, then characters from Gaiman and Pratchett's novel and the television show *Supernatural* have no reason to engage in dialogue. Massumi (2014) further counters this idea of verisimilitude when he describes a situation in which he might be referring to *lectercollapsingchurches* and *afteryourdeathormine*. He says, "One never simply imitates a form, in the sense of conforming oneself to the given form of another being. One can certainly make as if one were effectively imitating. But something else is really going on, unacknowledged and inexpressibly" (82). He goes on to describe the act of a child

imitating an animal, specifically a tiger, and notes that the result is surprising: "The child plays the tiger in situations in which the child has never seen a tiger. More than that, it plays the tiger in situations no *tiger* has ever seen, in which no earthly tiger has ever set paw. The child immediately launches itself into a movement of surpassing the given" (83). In other words, *lectercollapsingchurches* is never just Hannibal Lecter but some other creature formed by transindividual work with other characters. The role player becomes the fictional role to start, but the activation of the ludic gesture changes the original design of the muse chosen.

5. Muns, muses, and anons at play

Most role players embrace powerlessness when they enact scenes with the muse in charge. While the character he or she adopts may be, at first glance, only an alternate identity, it quickly escalates to become something more, and often that something more means looking beyond traditional notions of self. The handle *Muse-room* acts as an archive of complaints by muses who wish to defy their muns. In one post, the writer simply says, "Muse Problems #11: Having to do things I don't want to do in [role-play] threads" (*Muse-room* 2013). In this example, a role player, acting as a muse, states that the muse's will operates independently of the author who created her. The muse here expresses frustration because it is trapped inside a system where it must "do things [it] [doesn't] want to do." This idea is not

new, of course, since many authors have expressed the sentiment that their characters often write themselves after the narrative engine of a fictional world ignites. However, muses and their authors are not always carried away on a tide of narrative energy; rather, the muse and the mun often act at odds when engaged in transindividual play in the same way Latour's (2005) puppets and their marionettes tolerate each other's whims.

Another meme that circulates on Tumblr and has been reblogged by user *alexs-rp-shit* (2015) includes a Muppet character in front of a flaming background. In this meme the mun, offstage, cries out "Muse, no!" only to have the Muppet grin evilly and say "Muse, YES!" while the flames rise higher. This would be another example of how the role player perceives the muse acting against the mun's wishes and wreaking havoc. The humor here reinforces the idea that powerlessness and humility are part of the role-play experience rather than something to be policed or avoided. Additionally, the muse's refusal to acquiesce to the mun's demands is a construct that foreshadows the way the scenes among partners will play out.

Indeed, players encourage spontaneity rather than shy away from it by inviting others to assist in rupturing the normal life of their muse. User *Beverly katzon thecase* (2013) reblogged a post in which she asked the following: "In the middle of a conversation, my muse begins to cough

up blood. How would your muse respond?" The prompt asks for a specific reaction in which her role-play character and another person's character will engage in an inciting moment that could lead to a short or long scene. By accepting the challenge, the mun becomes powerless, first, because she cannot alter the inciting incident but must accept it in good faith from another, and second, she must consider how the character would act in such a scenario, and the character often surprises and humbles the player. One post on user gxnevra-archieve's (2014) site, which generated over 12,000 likes and reblogs, aptly summarizes the dilemma by saying "what the fuck is my muse doing" and signing the line "every rp'er ever." Role player susie1x1 (2016) reblogged a similar statement—"I'm sorry I have no control over them, I just write the thing." This post was also signed "every rper ever." In a sense, this phenomenon speaks to what Massumi (2014) discusses in terms of play. The muse is not simply part of the writer but something that exceeds her or his control.

[5.4] The ludic act, therefore, moves beyond the individual consciousness and becomes, between two players, a "transindividual" enterprise that "involves-esquing gestures that produce greater degrees of copossibility" (Massumi 2014, 42). Again, with the term *transindividual* we recognize that selfhood dissolves in the act of play to reveal a different entity altogether. This

idea explains how partners may accomplish what individual role players may not experience in isolation. Reference to the term *esquing* is made to suggest that when one gestures "as a tiger" or "like a tiger," the human act of role-play exceeds the original creature in its design. The same is true when writers take on personalities of their favorite characters and engage in dialogue with others who are esquing or playing in the same fictional world. The role player on Tumblr, unlike the zombie image on Facebook, has the ability to see transindividual work happening among the mun and muse as well as within different threads of role-play with other players.

[5.5] When working with other players, a few guidelines do apply, despite their love for unpredictable moments at play. Most users abhor godmodding, the act of one player trying to control another in a given scenario. Such a practice leads role players to complain publicly on certain crowdsourced blogs about role-play as a hobby. An anonymous post on the handle roleplaying confessions from pers (2016) expresses frustration about one of her partners: "I don't like role playing with this particular mun. They godmodded an entire thread with me, made one of the characters really OOC [out of character] and I feel no connection roleplaying with them as both mun and muse." A set of crowdsourced role-play guidelines from user destinationrpg (2016) provides this advice: "Your charac-

ter will never know everything and be able to overhear everything. There are no omnipotent characters." Here the role-play does have a set of guidelines established by moderators, which does occur often in more regimented communities of Tumblr role players, where users may solicit applications and cast a group of users. However, even in the most established groups, this tendency to avoid one player's control over the other reminds us again that one muse does not get to call the shots or act as master over another. Most role players, both the independent ones and the members of groups, shy away from planning and constructing scenes in advance. User thermxdynamicsarchived (2015) has a reblogged post (with a total of 12,668 reblogs and likes) that states:

[5.6] Plotting RPs like—

Partner: let's do this!

Me: i'm ready!

Partner: how we startin

Me: i wish i knew

[5.7] In addition, Tumblr role players invite the participation of a third actor in their solar system of chosen identities: the anonymous writer, or the anon. The ask function on the Tumblr account includes an anonymous option so that even those with identifiable usernames may hide them by checking the option to post information without leaving a name behind. For example, bloggers who wish to receive feedback on their writing will issue calls to anon readers. The user

deadatmyfeet (2013) posted the following message as an invitation: "Go on ANON and *tell me what you think of me*. I do not want to know who it is, at all. Don't tell me who it is, don't give me hints, don't say your screen name. Tell me exactly what you think of me. Don't sugarcoat things. *Don't lie*. If you hate me, tell me why. Tell me what I'm doing wrong. If you like me, tell me why." These anons provide valuable writing advice and creative challenges to help the role players engage in scenes. They also expose the player to potential risk, since the absence of a subject's name or face means that vindictive or hateful messages are sent in addition to productive ones.

Some anon activity circulates in the form of challenges to all members of a certain role-play community. These writing prompts are often referred to as "Magic Anons." In a Magic Anon challenge (often abbreviated as M!A), the player will accept the challenge depending on what the anon asks her or him to do in a future scene.

For example, the *Supernatural* community, in one challenge, lists the various affectations that a muse must confront if they allow the anon to control her or him. The below example is only a partial list of what the entire post offers as prompts.

M!A from SPN Episodes (2013):

Born Under a Bad Sign: muse gets possessed by a demon. It can be a random one or anon can specify who it is (anon tells length).

The Rapture: muse gets possessed by an angel. If they're already an angel, someone else knocks them out of their vessel and takes their place (anon specifies length).

Mystery Spot—Gabriel put muse into a time loop, anon can specify the place/situation, lasts until a Gabriel muse lets them out.

Torn and Frayed—Muse is under Naomi's control and will act like a perfect little soldier, including killing any rebels/enemies of Heaven. Lasts until someone breaks them out of it.

Croatoan—muse is trapped in a town with people infected with the virus. Will they survive?

Frontierland—muse is sent back in time to the Wild West (anon specifies length)

This list complements the theory that play is ideally, as Massumi (2014) suggests with his animal examples, adaptable to new situations. When the role player posts a request that anons choose a writing prompt from lists like the one above, prompts referred to in the community as M!A posts, or Magic Anons, the regular pattern of role-play is disrupted to allow for challenges that the player may not have anticipated. For example, if an anon chooses one of the prompts, she sends the word *Croatoan* to a role player's inbox, and the player must then imagine that his or her "muse is trapped in a town with people infected with the virus." These posts typically set up obstacles for the

role player to confront, which are usually described in terms of physical harm or disability to the human form. Examples may also include the practice of making the character blind for 24 hours, causing it to suffer an allergy, or having it follow directions of another person because of mind control or hypnosis. In these exercises, the writer must maintain the identifying characteristics of their role while also meeting the request of the M!A task. Sent by an anonymous writer, the commands are taken seriously even when the one sending the request refuses to identify herself, which is a sign in other communities of cowardice or refusal to accept consequences. The faceless user acts as controller over the role player's fictional persona, thereby creating revelatory moments where the outcome surpasses what could be imagined alone.

Conclusion

Transindividualism suggests that role players on Tumblr are doing more than just empathizing with others when they join their particular fan communities. They are negotiating and disrupting boundaries of self in unique ways, and such acts require great humility and de-centering of the individual. Most research on role-play focuses on how community participation and interaction ultimately serves the self, sometimes even as a form of therapy. In the past, role-play represented a way for an individual to work through personal problems and fears in a low-stakes environment, and scholarship

about play has mostly followed suit in stressing the benefits of the individual who plays pretend.

While role-play does offer therapeutic benefits, the recent actions of Tumblr users show fans of certain narratives moving beyond the need to improve one's own relation to the world. Rather than the world serving the individual, the individual in these cases serves the world by allowing her- or himself to be swept up in play. A major part of this transindividual work is the acknowledgment that world building and narrative is an unpredictable activity: role players do not control their muses or seek to do so. In celebrating this loss of control, the player also opens him- or herself up to other players' needs and strengths while navigating a scene.

The emphasis on authorial loss of agency and power serves as a model for what kinds of collaboration and community may eventually be formed without the aid of one dungeon master or storyteller. Even though role-play activity, either in online settings or in tabletop gaming, may seem to be a democratic enterprise, experience tells us that someone is

often in charge of what unfolds in a ludic moment. The egocentricity associated with such leadership positions limits transindividual work because the structure of power intervenes with the creative efforts of players.

Considering transindividualism in fan communities helps us recognize that once the act of play begins, the potential of players expands and surpasses the given constraints of any one ego. Rather than champion the traits of an individual's mind, the energy spent praising the human consciousness may be used to forge meaningful connections across and among ideas and beings. By taking such surprising fields as animal studies into account when approaching fan communities, participants of role-play and researchers of their work have opportunities to decenter human understanding to make room for a world where all living things teach us how play may transform us. It is then possible to imagine a reality in which humility and willingness to cede control become indispensable to play and, consequentially, indispensable to other parts of life as well.

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Supernatural empowerment: show and identities of communities

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Abstract

Rafael Bienia's *Role Playing Materials* focuses on three forms of gaming: live-action role-playing (LARPing), mixed reality games, and tabletop games. As a game designer, player, and member of the Digital Games Research Association (DiGRA), Bienia has significant experience in these areas of gaming. Bienia begins *Role Playing Materials* by deconstructing the terminology of play, starting with the idea that "role playing is a hobby for people who enjoy imagining and exploring characters who are challenged with invented tasks in fictional worlds" (13). He points out, however, that any time people imagine they are someone else and consider how they would act or react as that character, they are role-playing. According to Bienia, "gaming" is a construct of games, players, and practical materials. In *Role Playing Materials*, the interconnectedness of games, player culture, and game studies is evident across the text. Bienia sees the research process itself as a role-playing process, which lends nuance to the discussion.

Keywords: County, epistemologia, Milton's Study

Ontological and epistemological categorization informs Bienia's larger discussion of role-playing and the role-playing process. Central to his research are Latour's concepts of action and actor. Bienia examines human, nonhuman, and

material actors and actions in role-playing. In chapter 2, "Methodology and Theory," he notes that action is observable when a network of actors work together: "The pencil does not write without paper or hand, the paper does not show traces

of words without pencil or hand, the hand does not write without a writing device or a piece of paper" (23). Rather than defining role-playing materials as single objects or components, Bienia provides a network-based definition that allows him to evaluate the concept across media.

Insights in this text open up further interesting discussion of the permanence of perspective. For example, time restrictions as he worked to inhabit varying perspectives also changed his practices (such as making new or wearing old costumes) (32). His reiteration of Markus Montola's (2005) suggestion that players define game spaces and that they realize the power to do so through character agency makes compelling the juxtaposition and blending of his statuses as participant and observer, player and researcher.

In chapter 4, "Mixed Reality Role-Playing Games," Bienia briefly details the history of merging real and virtual spaces from the 1960s on and explores the 40-year history of tabletop games. Building these histories, Bienia argues that the meaning of role-play is fluid and depends on a range of factors, including individuals, communities, sessions, and games. Given this fluidity, Bienia focuses his work on an exploration of "how...materials (actors) make role playing (agency) work in role-playing games (network)" (37). While Bienia recognizes the classic elements of role-play noted in previous scholarship (narratives, goals,

and rules), his focus on role-playing's network of material actors emphasizes the ways that role-playing works. Thus, rather than offering a historical accounting of these games, he engages the games' materials as collaborative elements with narrative features.

Bienia positions *Role Playing Materials* as a bridge between past and future research. According to Bienia, "Mixed reality technology pushes game development towards a vanishing of a dividing line between the digital and non-digital" (164). He argues that "actor-network theory provides one toolbox to understand these changes" (164). In studying role-playing, Bienia seeks to complement but not duplicate game studies' previously mapped territories and patterns. *Role Playing Materials* is "a dissertation about role playing and materials" and "about materials that are role playing" (169). In key moments, the writing alternates between the perspectives of human and nonhuman materials. In an effort to change *how* we know about role-playing, Bienia both shares his game-playing experience and speculates on what the game experience might be like from the perspective of other materials within the network. During a tabletop game, he personifies nonhuman elements (a lamp, a pencil, and a table) in order to examine the various places and contexts engaged in role-playing.

Bienia argues that the symbolic facilitates play in all role-playing scenarios.

Fake blood might be used to represent wounds in LARPs, avatars represent the players in video games, and a map can represent a castle in a blighted kingdom in a tabletop campaign. Detailing his experiences with an Alcyon LARP, Bienia shows how real-life significances inform player decisions. He notes that cosplayers often wear lighter garb for brief indoor events, while LARPer may select different gear to be worn outdoors. Game preparation occurs well before a LARP. During the preparation process, sleep, food, and necessary game items become part of the game's material network, expanding and aiding in the fulfillment of the game's narrative. To this end, the players dirty their new, store-bought clothes, place their canned food in earthenware bowls to make the game feel more realistic, and modify their materials to incorporate aspects of their characters, worlds, and story lines. Thus, human and nonhuman actors are interrelational collaborators and "this distribution of work makes a dichotomy between human and non-human irrelevant as a precondition to know larp" (88–89).

Analyzing the mobile game *Obscurus 2*, Bienia shifts focus to address how role-playing works in mixed reality games (and those augmented to be based in virtual reality) that use smartphones and computers. Bienia touches on game modification and the cost of materials, but focuses most on smartphones. According to him, smartphones allow access to a world

beyond the game and are less stable as collaborative actors within role-playing scenarios. For example, the indoor location of one player of the mobile game *Obscurus 2* made it difficult for that player to receive transmissions and game updates. Consequently, all the players had to integrate the technical problems into their role-playing. Eventually they decided to all move outside. Although the material-material relation required only this small change, the example highlights ways that role-playing's material actors work with narrative actors to construct the game experience (100–101).

Studying the single-player online role-playing game *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* (Bethesda Game Studios, 2011), Bienia explores the differences between instrumental and "pretend" play. He argues that the game's prerendered landscape and plot limit the player's possible actions and as a result require more work of the player. The prescribed responses in computer gaming are like those in tabletop games. However, in *Skyrim*, "characters can swim through icy water without effect. Interacting with the cold world does not connect the actor water to character play" (110). Modding, the modification of hardware, software, or game-operating functions, is also covered here. Player communities create and add elements to the core game to enhance the experience of playing. For example, in *Skyrim*, the Hypothermia mod allows weather to be a significant factor affecting

armor use and actions like jumping into rivers.

Bienia argues that players define game spaces, but that they realize this power through their interactions with game materials. For example, he describes his view of *Skyrim* when using the Oculus Rift virtual reality headset:

Every part of the game world falls into the "right place." However, the mushrooms on the tunnel floor are surprisingly big. When playing *Skyrim* with an LCD monitor, the mushrooms were small and I barely noticed them...Replacing the LCD with the virtual reality display, everything is still in proportion to the body of my character, but as the proportion between the character's body and my body changes...the environment grows and the mushrooms designed for an LCD become larger than life. (116)

Time is one boundary in a game, and all play includes edges and landscapes, from a physical map in a tabletop game to the edges of the realm past which an avatar cannot navigate in a video game. *Role Playing Materials* compellingly examines a range of game boundaries, as well as the places where these boundaries are thin. Throughout, Bienia acknowledges the limitations inherent in observing the fluid

nature of game play through static moments. He argues that that new game scenarios and changes in materials will inevitably produce different forms of play and game study each time. He concludes that research on any "stable mixed reality role-playing game network has to include more work on relations" because "when materials collaborate in a tabletop role-playing game, materials role-play, too...Researchers who want to understand materials as collaborators in role playing need to expand their understanding of role playing as a process that includes non-human actors" (159–60).

Role Playing Materials argues that in order to understand the complexity of role-playing games, future research must acknowledge relations between narrative, ludic, and material actors. More importantly, these interrelations must be studied without giving any one actor a preferred position. This text prepares the ground for those interested in actor-network theories, game studies, games research methods, the process of play, and even ethical considerations of game materials and manufacture.

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"The literary criticism of the Azerbaijani literature of 1960-1970"

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Abstract

The enrichment of the Azerbaijani prose in 1960-70 with new ideas and aesthetic features, deepening of artistic relation to historical and contemporary social realities, renewal of its artistic heroes concept is one of the main creative features attracting the attention of contemporary literary critique. The literary theoretical thought broadly expressed in the context of historic and contemporary issues of artistic writing on creative issues in history, and has drawn his hero in this context. While the contemporary literature in the Soviet era is one of the leading problems in literature, the issue of history is also in the theoretical analysis. The issue of history and writer, raised first by Mehdi Hussein in the 40s of the 20th century as an issue of literary criticism, reached the level of history of literature in the 60s and 70s. The best historical works of the period of criticism are highly appreciated by Ismayil Shikhli's "Dali Kur", Isa Huseynov's "Mashar", Mirza Ibrahimov's "Parvana" novels, Farman Karimzadeh's "Going Through" narrative and other literary samples, which observe the freshness of the artistic view in history. The critics point to the fact that those heroes, such as Jahandar Agha, Imadeddin Nasimi, Fazlullah Naimi, Karbalayi Ismayil, Narimanov, Vafadar, have historic facts as well as modernity. Despite the literary stereotypes of the Soviet era, the appreciation of Cahandar Agha, characterized by the high internal and spiritual world of national historical personalities, as well as the Karbala Ismail, is linked to the writer's courage in criticism, em-

phasizing the essence of the essentially renewal of the "thinking" heroes of the Soviet era. The history and modern heroes of the 1960s and 1970s have played a key role in the creation of new, distinctive forms of the prose in the coming literary periods, especially in the 1980s.

Key Words: narrative, novel, history, modernity, prose, theme, hero, artistic, literary, criticism, national, literary criticism.

Introduction

The most characteristic feature of the new generation of Azerbaijan is the fact that human personality penetrates into the depths of the inner-spiritual world, the selection of artistic heroes from "more domestic spheres", daily life flow, gradual disappearance of traditional "positive and negative" dimensions in their description and presentation, attention, comprehension in the presentation of the image, the appearance of compositions, the further enhancement of the author's image in the overall structure of the work, and the growing interest in autobiographies. In the 60-70s of the 20th century, the importance of personality attitudes in our national artistic prose, the increasing interest in its psychology, and the deepening of attention to the person were generally regarded as the main quality characterizing the literature of this era. The criticism of the '60s is a problem of novel hero, first of all, a novel hero' (Islam Ibrahimov), thus explaining the major success of all genres of the genre, including the

broadest genre, through his heroic concept. As literary critique points out, in the artistic thought of this stage, the introduction of "human studies" in a new style, a new subject and a new problem, the intensification of the inner layers of the personality, the inner world, "not only the" social system and structure " the artistic analysis and research that has previously been described as "conscientious, ethical, ethical, moral, and ethical".

Critical comments also include literary and theoretical ideas that ignore the new hero of the early 1960s and identify him with the traditional hero of the labor of previous literary stages. Islam Ibragimov writes about the main hero of the new generation: "The main hero of our literature is a person fighting for civil ideals, active in a historical optimistic position, who builds and creates an integral, creative personality for the purpose of life." (Ibrahimov I "The roads of historical optimism", Azerbaijan, No. 7, 1962, p.205)

Of course, this type of hero, who suffered from immediate criticism, "painfully and painfully perceived," was not objectively evaluated for the first time. Negation of the Nemat in the White harbor of Anar and its consistency with the "realistic understanding of the writer's life" is an indication of this, such as literary criticism.

The main topicality of the problem, which has not yet been investigated in literary criticism in Azerbaijan, is the systematic non-disclosure of criticism of the concept of artistic heroes of prose.

The article creates concrete theoretical information about the critical principles of the review and analysis of the artistic proverb and is of particular importance for research in this field. The practical importance of the article is its usefulness for teaching seminars, special courses and elective subjects, as well as their value as an important theoretical source for students, masters and doctoral students.

Methodology. Basically, the research uses the historical-comparative method and the theoretical savings of contemporary literary criticism.

The main text: the Azerbaijan art prose of 1960-1970 has an exceptional significance in the history of development of our national prose with outstanding achievements in art. At this

stage, the prose of new problematic ideas with enrichment of shades, spiritual and moral values that contribute to the preference for themes, psychological analysis, deepening of events, a new perspective, serious and thoughtful creative conflicts, hidden layers of human morality, penetrating into the new literary conception of the hero - people work, the hero of choice, artistic thought, the personal factor in strengthening the artistic image and təhkiyənin yığcamlığına to match, a new fiction has observed a figurative - a method of "analysis" angle "inner monologue, consciousness» «təhkiyədə contrast function prototyping, experiments" (Y. Garayev) - one of the typical features of its high-quality renovation. He opposes all obstacles and obstacles that do not arise, which is connected with a significant process, such as democracy, human rights and society. During this period, the highest demands and criteria, social and artistic thought about new savings and armed, strengthened modern prose of the most beautiful examples in the present life, as well as the development of society from the previous stages of the relationship look fresh and different from those presented in the original. "(2, 197)

In the prose of this era, described as "Multi-purpose and multicultural" (Y.

Garayev), creative search of "sixty" generations is especially interesting. "Sixty-sixth" nationalistic artistic prose led literary conquests "New Generation" and "New Wave" into scientific vocabulary. The highly artistic critic Mehdi Hussain, who observes and appreciates this innovation, observing that "our literary development is on the verge of a breakthrough" says: "I can safely say that we have entered a new stage in our artistic prose and poetry. There is no need to rush to assert that this stage has already taken a definite position. The most important aspect is that our literary community is aware of the importance of passing the stage. The tendency not to seek a more timely and full approach to psychological analysis, to find newer and more recent forms of expression and interpretation of life events and human drawings is no less important tendency" (3, 10).

In the critically acclaimed articles, the "hothead" did not provide an objective scientific assessment of the research, the essence of this update, a more comprehensive scientific and theoretical understanding of this stage in the following decades, is an analytical interest that is considered a self-critical stage of criticism, criticism, and also in the 80s and the 90s. In the criticism of these years, the definitions of

"new prose", "sixty-six" were clearly defined, and the genre, style and heroic character of the literary process were properly classified. Criticism notes the new creative qualities that are evident in the literature, explores the factors that make up the aesthetic body of prose, enriches the literary process of young, talented writers with new subjects, characters, new styles and creative materials in the literary environment, enriching their genre, and emphasized the ample opportunities for further development of our national literature. (4, 422.)

In the 1960s and 1970s, the literary and theoretical ideas of creativity were particularly impressive. At this stage, literary criticism and criticism of literary heritage and literary heritage, literary heritage and heritage, classical literature and modern literary process, modernity and history, criticism and literary criticism were achieved in literary criticism of Azerbaijani literature "striving to reach the level of world standards" (Elchin). In this historical period, literary criticism and the literary process won leading positions in the system of problems of criticism and literature, at the all-Union level "under the wings of modern understanding" (Elchin). History was ignored as "standing against modernity". Criticism, which for a long time was con-

sidered an organic affinity for these two important aesthetic categories, misinterpreted history and modernity as one of the creative problems that one denies the other. A direct account of the philosophical and aesthetic nature of modernity shows that studying these two problems in isolation and ignoring their mutual relationship has led to artificial obstacles to the development of literature and criticism at different times.

Mehdi Hussain in his article "The Historian and History" in 1943 explains that the historical event and the concept of reality, the historical period and the general characteristic of the situation are described in the art work "The True Historical and Artistic Work of the Specific Period of History, it was the artistic work in which the contradictions arising here" (5, 422)

Mamed Arif also considered this issue with this prism, demanding that the writer create artistic advice and images that correctly reflect the meaning, the spirit of history, the legitimacy of social development and do not distort the essence of the facts. Criticism wrote: "Since the writer is not a historian, the task of artwork is not to study history, it is the duty of historians. This idea, accepted by all, is the starting point for determining the writer's attitude to history. The main problem for

a writer who writes historical events through artistic drawings and live dialogues depends on the purpose of history" (6, 355)

The Russian poet Z. Zlobin protested against the modernization of history in the 1950s and logically said: "Now I forgot that this is not the opposite. History does not save yesterday to start today today. This is a single process" (7, 124). The Azerbaijani literary and theoretical idea confirmed this idea in articles, studies that analyzed prose in the 60s and 70s.

In the early twentieth century, the problem of "history" became relevant with the concept of national literature, the attitude of the issue to the problem in S.Vurgun, the study of M.Huseyn in the 40s - the transition from class to nationalism, attention to the problem in the following decades. which led to an increase. The need to assess the problem in the form of history, craftsmanship and modernity (8, 175) in the 1970s, the need to assess the history of the world from the level of contemporary morale and aesthetic requirements, in the 80s, the idea of the literary idea of "the history of philosophy" was a manifestation of different approaches.

Criticism of the 70's came to the conclusion that an objective understanding of historical events also con-

tributed to the artistic development of modernity. He focuses on the artistic-aesthetic, philosophical and sociological aspects of the concept of "artistic history" and "historical subject" in a new stage, and the aesthetic attitude of art to history has changed. At this stage, the history of criticism is understood and valued not only as the quality of literary works, but also as the "artistic sense of the present" and the "unit of aesthetic evaluation". In historical work, historical chronology, in contrast to the stages of its strict observance, requires an understanding of history in the 1970s, according to the principle of modern morality and ethics. In the criticism of this stage, the focus of attention is on the unity of Man, History and Time in artistic thought. Criticism emphasizes that the image of a historical personality is strongly characterized by its national and individual characteristics and is universal in size and scale.

The 1970s attempted to clarify the specifics of the critical history of art as an aesthetic category, explaining it as an artistic description of the writer who presented the fate of human history in a dialectical relation to historical reality. Criticism in these years focuses on the features of artistic history in literature, noting that "an artistic event or personality influences the be-

havior of an era, as well as the artistic interpretation of the subject of the era, its behavior, behavior and psychology." (9, 139)

Freedom of expression, characterized by a change in the political climate in the 1990s, required a return to the problem of "history." The theoretical idea, which violated the framework of 70 years of ideology, the framework of sociological restrictions, has made fundamental research into this problem. Meanwhile, "History: closely and remotely" (1996), "Elfin" "Problems of History and Modernity in Literature" (1997) Y. Garayev is selected according to the aspect of relations of good relations.

From a historical point of view, the attitude of criticism to the novel "Deli Kur", completely new in its ideological context, is counterproductive in the literary and scientific environment at this stage. Unlike the stereotypes of the era of the "Crazy Cours", it turned out that I. Shihilli destroyed the subject standards of sosrealtyism, as well as the work of genealogy and a firm commitment to national historical existence. Unlike the past, I. Shikhli, who came to an agreement with the epic experience of the national epoch, approaching a new, modern position, created a very artistic example of a completely new problematic, ideologi-

cal and artistic secret. "Dali Kur" honestly reflected a specific historical era, its general level and the contradictions of the political climate of that time, although it did not mention a certain historical event or historical conflict.

Criticism of criticism was not in its historical reality, but in the "truth and reality" of events, but in the writer's ability to describe the features of certain epochs to people of the modern era. In particular, in the 1980s there was a theoretical and literary idea "to see the fallacy of feudal laws in this novel, the way in which the new way of life strengthened consciousness and morality in its interpretation of its specific characteristics" (10, 103).

Criticism "was noted as the main attributes of our great novels - the tendencies of the development of society, the trends in history, the typical aspects of the period, the dynamics, the character, the story line and the evolution of the text. [11, 26] It was precisely because of these qualities that artistic prose The novel had a very strong influence on the search for modernity.

As a rule, most articles about criticism in the 1960s and 1970s were published in the study of the prose "Dali-kura". And in all this it is stressed that the lack of talent of I. Shikhla made an invaluable contribution to our litera-

ture, our novel, novel was considered the greatest achievement of the national generation in our time. According to Nizami Jafarov, "this work went through a story about dozens of narratives and novels in the national mentality and gave it to him - to anyone who could hide his emotions and amazement until he met a great girl from Mehdi Hussein to the great Mahdi Hussein." 12, 170). It is no accident that literary criticism and criticism led to a more objective assessment of the work, and in the 1990s, when she evaluated it with the highest aesthetic criteria of the "Daly Cours" in the late 1990s to the mid-1960s, about 10 years after "A masterpiece after the crown" (12, 170). was considered.

(Yehia Seyidov) in his book "Deep Faith in the Prevention of Renewal" (Mirza Ibragimov) "for reasons that led to the struggle, but not the struggle of the working people" in a certain period of time (criticism) "reflects social psychology, social contradictions and tendencies" (Yavuz Akhundlu), since the novel "born of faith and confidence" (Israel Mustafayev) as "the bridge of art between our past and future" (Mastan Aliyev), "will flow into future periods", "Daly Kur" as an example of high art. However, the criteria for assessing the literary success of the era did not allow the refined poet-

ry of the work, the perfect interpretation of idea-content and mastery. Written by Yashar Garayev: "Our article on the legal" criticism "of" Daly Kure ", which in those years completely denied the prose of" Dali-kura ", and the restoration of" Daly-kur "was not written yet (13, 115)

Modern history, as an aesthetic category, acquired a more active position in literary criticism and criticism of Azerbaijanis in the 1960s and 1970s and became the subject of extensive scientific discussions, discussions, creative consultations and became the subject of fundamental research. Criticism has contributed to modernity more than any other literature problem (sometimes even extreme!). At the all-Union level, the problem of modernity poses the most serious problem in the literature, Sov. The XX-XVI Congress of the CPS reflected the importance of modernity in artistic creativity as "realism, parties and innovations." In 1961, the Plenum of the Writers' Union of the USSR paid special attention to the present in the context of the responsibility of literary criticism combined with its successes and shortcomings and presented specific demands for criticism. But here too, subjectivism was resolved. "Criticism should explore life as a writer, meet with the heroes of future books in construction, in

the Labor Camp" (14, 117). It is impossible to avoid the ideological dictatorship of that era. But in general, attention and demand for modernity led to its deepening in the literature as to creative quality.

The relevance of literary criticism as an important component of modernity is also of particular interest to the national factor. This is the main quality that promotes the history of nationalism as an aesthetic category. However, the extreme distortion of the concept of "nationalism" in the aesthetics of the Soviet period for many years prevented literary and theoretical understanding and explanation of this concept. During this period of criticism it was asserted that literature is one of the basic requirements, it "melted" within the nationalist essence of the essence and value of literature as an important idea - an aesthetic quality. When "nationalism" had in mind "provincialism", the reality of multinational socialism was understood. In the 1970s, literary criticism of Azerbaijan continued to be the subject of the problem and demanded that "art should preserve its national identity" always when it came to the spiritual wealth created by other peoples. Criticism of examples of world literary experience, which deserved the right to perpetuate works reflecting national values, urged

contemporary writers to avoid national identity. Literary and theoretical ideas constantly tried to explain nationality.

In the 1970s, the question of the unity of mankind with nationalism was the subject of research, the main value of art was explained by this quality. Criticism emphasizes that the art of art can reveal its national identity in the breadth of its worldview and that it truly recognizes its national identity when it comes to human culture. Millions are praised as people without any geographical boundaries, and that national art is equally important for everyone, and this savvy national identity is conditional in the real literature. In the 1980s, the criticism of the socio-social roots of the nationalist factor in literature influenced the depth of the problem and made a more conceptual, radical attitude to the problem. Millions were perceived as the main criterion of ideological and socio-spiritual processes and were considered the basis of social, moral and ideological activity. Not only literature, but also language and culture, history, ecology, etc. In this respect, the problem was solved in this aspect. The article "The Nationalist Factor" by Yashar Garayev (1988) draws attention to literature as the most obvious example of this theoretical understanding of the subject. A new look at the creative problems of

literature in the 1990s is characterized by a clear, definitive theoretical approach to "nationalism." Literary criticism and criticism of nationalism is to portray artists as "characterized by typical and specific dyes in the socio-political and moral-psychological characteristics of people's lives in national specifics", to look at the "eyes" of their nations, the image of national lines - the desires of thought, width of thinking, sense of depth of patriotism and sensuality "(17, 56-57). In this context, Ismail Shikhli "Dali Kur", "Snow leopard" Farman Karimzadeh, "Massive novels of Isa Huseynov" were also evaluated.

Criticism in the 90s touches on the moments that clarify the reality of life, the opening of ideal issues, and the clarification that these issues serve to direct modernity in the explanation of the new poetics. Theoretical-aesthetic view is that the Azerbaijani prose has been in the 50's since "the fact of life from the ideological sky" (Tehran Alishanoglu) with concrete examples - B.Bayramov's "Leaves", I. Huseynov's "Burning Heart", İ.Efandiyev's "Soyudlu Arka" p. proof by works. Tehran Alishanoglu is right in his conclusion that the new poetry logic is justifiable: "Even until the New Generation, everything in the name of the truth of life was invisible, reflected,

and incoherent. But the "truth" did not appear again, it did not reveal all its rigidity, integrity, and caused many questions. The new prose began to think about this. More precisely, it was born of that thought. "(18, 22)

The most typical features of the new generation of Azerbaijan are the fact that human personality penetrates into the depths of the inner-spiritual world, and the artistic heroes are "gradually disappearing traditional" positive and negative "dimensions in the selection of the daily life, in the representation of images, concreteness, attention to the image of the author in the general structure of the work, increased interest in autobiographies" (19, 189). In this context, literary heritage concept in more literary fields has been critically critical. The criticism of the '60s' novel, "novel problem is primarily a problem of the hero of the novel" (20, 204), thus explaining the major success of all genres of the genre, including the broadest genre, with his heroic concept. This prose blows the indescribable literary stereotypes of the traditional prose, which is artificially ideologized, describes it as a hero of great sacrifice, an invincible victory, pride and majesty. The 60-ies prose precedes a more natural and sophisticated artistic description, the realistic lines of life's complexity - fortune-telling, self-esteem, good-

ness, humanism, humanism, inferiority, deficiencies, discrepancies, and so on. with its negative and positive qualities, achieves a complete, realistic character. Criticism accurately observes that the development of the society, the importance and necessity of the development and the decisive aspects of the society, were few for art, and in literature, little attention was paid to the small, individual aspects of the past.

In the criticism and literary criticism, we see that the new generation's heroes were first called "small" men, and this "minority" is understood to be ironically frivolous, that Akif Huseynov expresses his attitude to the issue with reference to the processes in world literature. He argues that analogy with Western literature has never been replaced at the same time as the character of the "small" men has changed, and that it is more correct to name national heroes "ordinary, ordinary" men. (11, 134)

The literary-theoretical insights, which ignore the new hero of the early 60s, and identify it with the traditional labor hero of the previous literary stages, are also included in the criticisms. Islam Ibrahimov writes about the protagonist of the new generation: "The main protagonist of our literature is a person who is active in the history

of optimism, struggling to create civic creatures, a sacred personality, a creative work, a civilian ideals." (20, 205)

The individual world, which came out with all the refined and complex manifestations of the hero of the 60s of the prose, the absence of any extraordinary factor in his self-esteem, the usual way of presenting it, and not choosing any of the exceptions, led the criticism to this new man. Of course, this type of hero, who suffered from the immediate acceptance of the criticism, "painfully and painfully perceived," was not objectively evaluated for the first time. The denial of Nemat at Anar's White Harbor and its coherence with the writer's "realistic understanding of life" is an indication of this. But in spite of this discrimination, starting with the end of the 50s of the 20th century, the emphasis on personality in our national artistic prose, the growing interest in its psychology, the deepening of attention to the people in the 60s and 70s, the emergence of "thinking" heroes are the main qualities characterizing the literature of this era such as literary criticism.

As the critique points out, in the artistic thought of this stage, the introduction of "human studies" in a new style, as a new subject and a new problem, intensifying the inner person's identity and the inner world, "rather

than a direct public system and structure" (21, 125), which first opens the way for conscience, ethics, ethics, morality, and morality.

Heroes of the artistic heritage of the 1960-1970s, achievements in this area, and remarkable innovations have become a major subject of criticism. Criticism appreciated the talent of the new literary generation, but often had difficulty analyzing their creative peculiarities, their search, the idea, the subject and the heroic world from an objective standpoint. Complaints about the lack of "warriors, selfless, organizing and propagandizing characters" (P. Khalilov), calls for creating images that are "ideals of high, bright life" in critical remarks of these years (P. Khalilov) sharp reprimand involves more theoretical. The critique points out that there is a great need to "pass from hate, rage, regrettable topics, events, drawings to heroic issues, to brilliant copy of ideals", as an important necessity in the face of literature.

On the contrary, criticism has denied the real picture of the 60-ies, and united the new hero with literary copies of the previous decades to prove literature's commitment to party decisions at a fresh stage. In this regard, Akif Aliyev's remarks are remarkable: "The interest in socio-psychological conflicts in the works of the prose has

greatly increased, and the Azerbaijani
nuns have attempted to create great
human characters in novels and narra-
tives. It was in the focus of such works
that the image and leadership of party
workers and struggles were based on
the description of their role. "(14, 119)
As we can see, the heroes representing
simple people of the prodigy are mis-
interpreted as " great men "," party
leaders " At the same time, it was for-
gotten that our nation's prose in the
late '50s had been renounced from the
image of Sultan Amirli and the image
of the ideal party worker of the previ-
ous decades.

The literary-theoretical view that
focused on this aspect of the criticism
in the 80's rightly dealt with the logical
point of the writer, "What should he do
if he intends to introduce the reader to
the ignorance and suffering of his life?"
"The writer's achievement reflects his
heroes' and they are influenced by
their fate "(11, 109), and in this aspect,
the progeny of the 1960s and 1970s
was investigated.

Criticism in this stage's artistic
prose is primarily based on the
strengthening of the factor of return to
man in the spirit of national and spir-
itual values, the new artistic concept of
the hero, the search for fresh forms,
and so on. has been seriously engaged
in analyzing creative features. It was

not accidental that the criticism of the
grand heritage of the national prose,
the search for art, focused on the hero's
concept. Still in the 1950s and 1960s,
criticism had such a tendency that he-
roes of this era should "go far beyond
the 30s of the heroes with their inner
wealth and cultural level. As the
sword's sharpness and firmness are
tested in the battlefield, the hero must
become mature in the fight against in-
justice. The hero's wishes and inten-
tions are small and dull, and the litera-
ture becomes frustrated and tense."
(23, 217) The heroes of the 1960s and
1970s were paying a high level of criti-
cism.

Criticism confirms the success of a
number of prose works in the purely
miniature genre of narration, thereby
emphasizing the undeniable signifi-
cance of the genre in the new literary
stage. For example, Suleiman
Rahimov's Kapaz claimed that the
writer was "successful in choosing a
miniature genre of narration" and that
the description and criticism of his
characters appeared in a new way. The
miniatures of Aziza Akhmedova's
"Cool Wind" draw attention to criti-
cism with its compact description and
successful images. But in his other
work of the same genre, the author
notes that the genre requirements of
miniature narrative are ignored. The

artificial restriction of the genre boundaries of Aziza Akhmadova in the work of the "grandfather's world", the fact that this is actually a small material that ignores the compactness of the image, and the presentation of individual information about the images is shown as the reasons for the failure of the miniature narrative. In miniature stories such as "Man at Home", "Health", Ismail Malikzadeh, "For Life" Amir Mustafayev and "Beramum" Mamedzade are subject to criticism and the weakness of the conflict.

The attitude of literary critics to the works of Jesus Huseynov in this genre is also interesting. Bakr Nabiyeu considers a miniature story of the writer related to each other as "Saz, Tyutek Sesi" and "Buddha Budak" in the context of certain events and drawings, chronological sequences and general purpose. The critically acclaimed writer speaks of the artistic "Sazah" and "Tyutek Sasi" as a work that can not be "supported" by Huseynov's work under the description of the "Dry Buddha." The main reason is that the writer sees imperfection as a pseudo-hero, who was focused on his sympathy, but almost as sadistic as he is.

Although in the mid-1950s many fantastic and detective works were written in our literature, the fact that these genres were not chosen in the

1960s was a serious criticism even from the impression of their lack of new prose. Generally speaking, these genres remained on the all-Union scale, a series of articles, literary discussions and round tables were published to raise their relevance. Fantastic genre - this purposeful literary event played an important role in the creation of artistic designs that attracted the attention of our national writers in science fiction, expressionistic fantasy, in the late 60's and 70's.

In the fantastic story "Contact" Anar, genre features were also critically developed. In literary and theoretical thought, it is emphasized that fantasy was not characterized by a "conditionally-playful" character and was chosen as a dramatic drama. There is a strange and unusual fantasy world, with this unnatural harmony and harmony that wants to "include a person in his own stick." Criticism attempts to disagree with the connection of the hero "Contact", the isolation of the surrounding world, the proximity of Anar Tale and the novel by F. Kafka "Huss" or the stories of H. Cortsar. However, the history of AP Chekhov's "Charming Man", which is directly connected with "Contact", with the idea of the idea, the proximity of the hero of art, remains unnoticed. However, the reason for the "Keepers" and "Contact"

heroes was the reason why they were isolated from the social environment, from people, the environment between themselves and their artificiality.

Most articles about the 1960-1970s criticism were published in the Center for Analysis of the Art of Deli Kür, a work published in the basics of fundamentalist research. The critique points out that achievements in the 60s and 70s are not effective for small genres, and draws attention to the novel "Deli Kür" by I. Shikhli, which clearly shows the importance and significance of I. Huseynov's innovations in small genres. Svetlana Aliyeva wrote about the artistic features of the work: "I. Shikhli discovered the perspective of the large-scale prose form, expediently revealed the emotional richness of the land, enriched the styles of the Azerbaijani style with realistic details within the limits of the time and movement within the limits of depth and laconism. Psychology and dramatism in this work draws attention to the fact that the fate of the people with the fate of the people is a new quality gained by the Azerbaijani prose." (24, 129)

Contemporary literary criticism and criticism are understood to be one of the major problems of artistic creativity, and this important component of artistic work is regarded as the most important factor in the perfect presen-

tation of the content. The inability to achieve the dissemination of the aesthetic essence of the work without any peculiarity in the structure of the plot is a reflection of the criticism of the 70-80s.

Literary criticism and criticism draws attention to the special attention and peculiar attitude of Isa Huseynov to the genre, plot-composition, and emphasizes that this factor plays an important role in the rise as a craftsman. The critique points out that the creation of a rather complex, dynamic and attractive plot is one of the most characteristic signs of Isa Huseynov's poetry. According to L. Hasanzadeh, "one of the peculiarities of plot-composition in I. Huseynov's prose is the fact that retrospection commonly occurs in existentialist works is very large. The heroes or the clerk always remember what is going on, past and present, and these memories are directly linked to the events of the main plot. These memoirs direct the reader to the essence of the world and man. Every time an important point, story, event is remembered for the hero's fate, there is a turning point behind the scenes. Sometimes such retrospectives are so important in the work that the burden on the artistic rock is at stake." (25, 23) In this regard, the writer's "Colloquial Koha" narrative, in general,

is" found in the ordinary comparison between what has happened before ", Jafali Javanshir's "limbuz Javanshir", Sword Gurban's "Contract Gurban", "Naked" grandmother's "Cindy's Snow" and so on. The reasons for the transformation of Kohan's "opening and dissolving" in retrospective contexts are completely fulfilled.

In the context of the essay context, the details of the telegram described in the telegram by the writer ("First Details", "Second Details," etc.) are regarded as "associative directional retrospection" and "essential composer parts which necessarily complement the plot line." In the narrative of "Natural and Strangers," it is emphasized that retrospective works provide both content and plot-compositional excellence, and the main information about the images in the worker is derived from this kind of reminder. The criticism is groundlessly regarded as a "work of art with pride," "a work of artificial plot", which is largely ignored by the 60th-century prose.

In literary-theoretical analysis, attention is drawn to various aspects of Jesus Huseynov's style of painting, a complex duplicate plot is characteristic of this prose. Renewed structural features of the 1960s also attracted the attention of critique of the style of styles. The issue of style is of great im-

portance in research related to the prose-propagation of the literary phase, although it is not the subject of controversy, as well as extensive literary debates, as well as other artistic qualities of the art. In particular, when considering the literary-theoretical material of the 60-70s, it is impossible to observe that the problem of style is caused by the need to say a word about the novelty of the literary criticism and the refreshing essay in the criticism. When it comes to speaking about style, its boundaries are narrowed, but explained only by the linguistic element. In general, in these years, the criticism style was understood and appreciated as artistic language and speech, limiting the style of the style by explaining the language of individuality of the artistic work. This pernicious tendency from the roots of Russian literary criticism is also evident in the assessment of the style of our national achievement. This is especially noteworthy in the monograph of Gulu Khalilov "From the History of the Azerbaijani Novel". In Q. Khalilov's classification of styles we observe that three of the five are based on the artistic language features. The criterion defined by the criticism is the artistic analysis of linguistic, literary and lyric-epic style, formed on the basis of a simple and lively folklore language,

determined in artistic-publicist language, the breadth of epic boards, and the combination of critical realism and socialist realism, distinguished by its sophistication, coloration, The style of the style promotes the language factor.

In the story of "Miller" in Mawlid Suleymanli, the plot seems very simple at first glance. But when it comes to stories hidden beneath the surface of the apparent simplicity, criticism can see that the motion is absorbed here and that it is melted in the text. As the critique points out, the simplest plot of the old mill on the roadside, where humans gradually disappear, drunkenness and losing humanity, actually gives the writer a very sophisticated insight. The solid dyes in the description of Mawlid Suleymanli, the "strongly natural representation in the rigid realist palette and the naked physiological publicity" are regarded as the factors that increase the tension in this simple plot: "The shepherd does not hurt his head not only in his professional habit, but also in dazzling lightning, There is a relentless ghost and a delight (demonic poetry!) on a knife. Their faded heads fill the baskets with their awesome eyes. Hot blood fills cold water in the back. When everything is ready, there are a lot of men from the city gathering. But they are not. They are just strangers, and there

are also strange destinies, both merciful and arrogant." (21, 139-140)

Emil Zolya's style is associated with the writer's essay, the "pathetic and supernatural" of everything, both real and myth, material and symbolic. Y. Garayev, who has been affiliated with M. Zuleymanli's "Drum" by M. Zulianli, observes the idea of both works, the similarity of social problems and the proximity of the female characters, which is completely fulfilled.

Criticism can be seen clearly in the 60-70's of the Azerbaijani prose, and observes that he was mature in the new literary stage in terms of epochs, events, and human characteristics. In the prose that mentioned, it was emphasized that each artist, who gained colorful "writer-writer, work-by-work", as well as a particular image, "brought his own language, his own personality and uniqueness". (26, 59)

Thus, in the 60-70s of XX century, the literary critique of Azerbaijan brought to the center of analysis the important issues of historical and modernity, artistic hero concept, craftsmanship, as well as the essence of the renewed essay.

Conclusion

The study concluded that in the works of the 1960s and 1970s, the problem of modernity, along with the his-

torical problem, was in the focus of literary criticism, and the heroes of the prose were also evaluated from this aspect. It has been observed that, unlike the analysis of other literary stages, criticism has linked the major success of this period to its heroic concept. The history's heroes have been critically analyzed in their critical life as a perfect personality-selected character, with agile intervention in life issues, rigorous logic, mistakes and contradictions, and the role of their influence on literary development in subsequent decades. One of the final conclusions of the conclusion is that the development of the new trend, the entirety of

its entirely new character, has led to the refinement of the essence of its critique, and has led to its new developmental attributes. The criticism has escaped literary-theoretical styles of thinking up to the 60's, and has begun to explore new artistic achievements with fresh ideas-aesthetic criteria. Thus, the new prose was also important in the formation of new principles of criticism and the cultivation of descendants of critics. It is unbelievable that the critics' findings, the value given to the new generation, play an important role not only in the literature of Azerbaijan, but also in the world literature.

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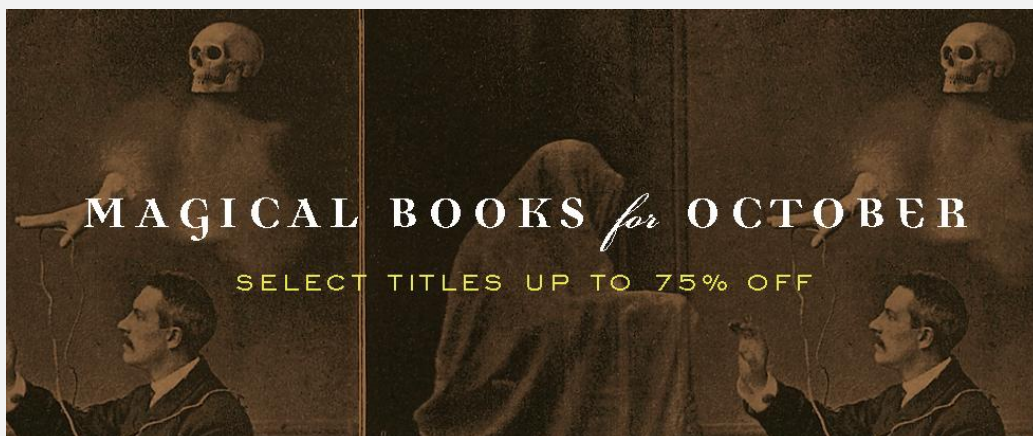
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